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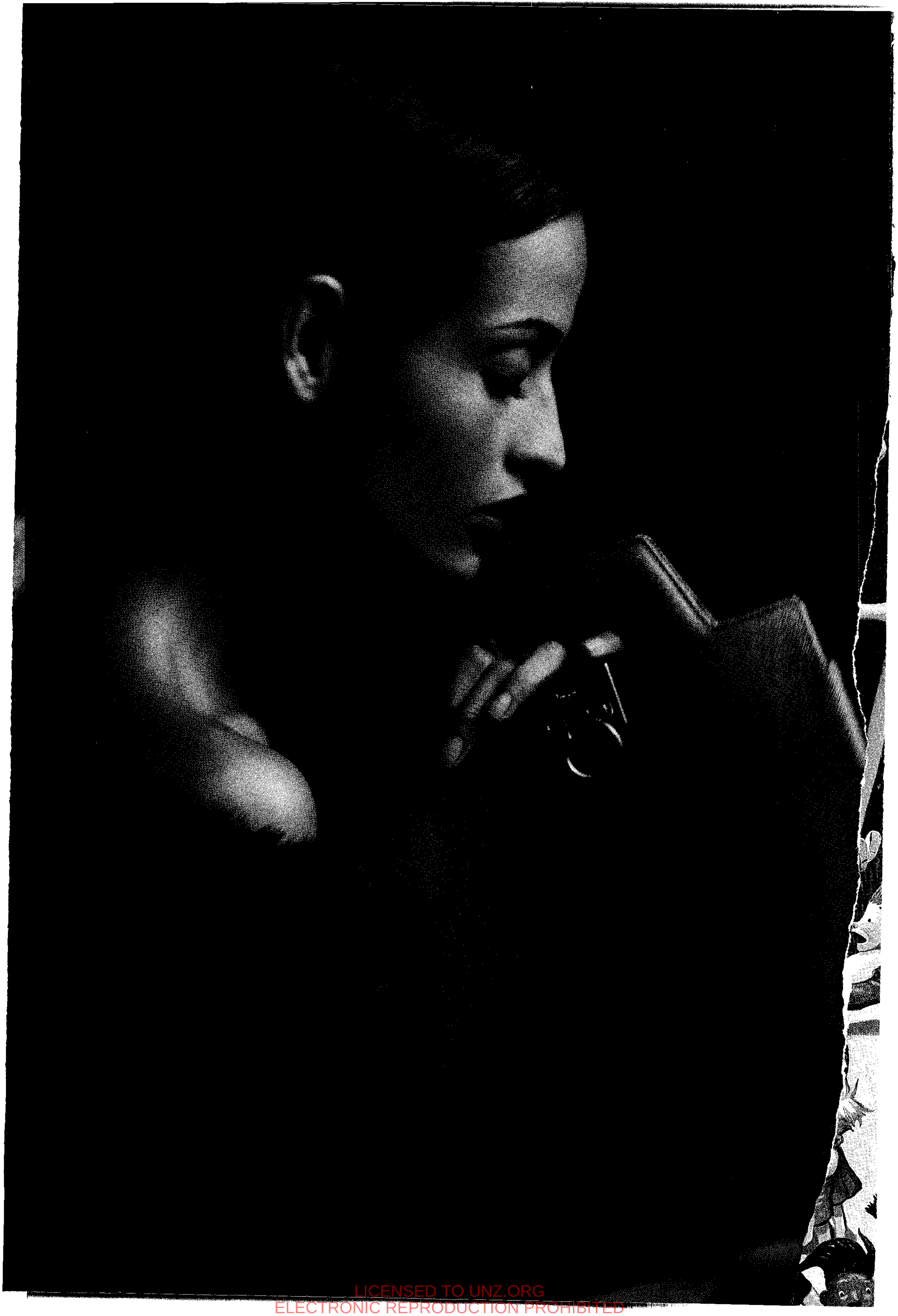

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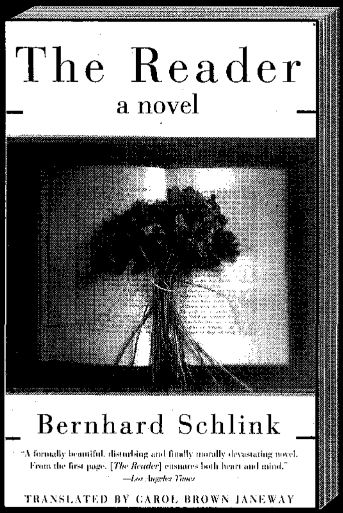
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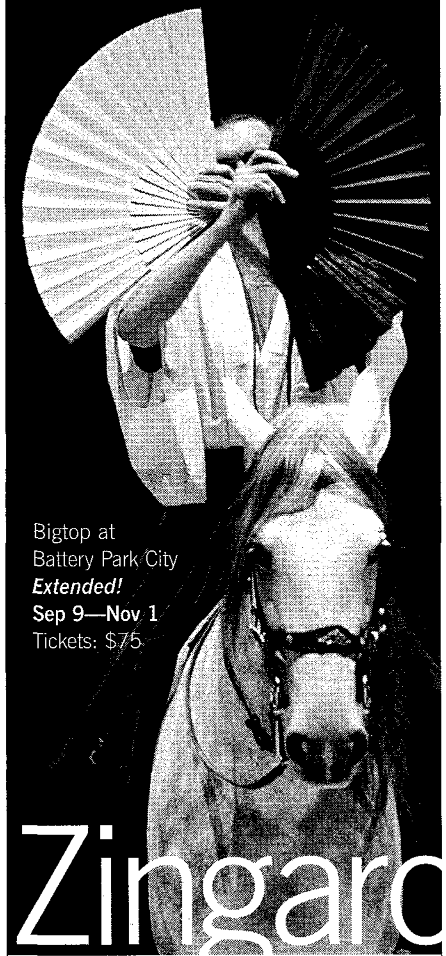

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COMMENT

GOODBYE TO ALL THAT

Wall Street gets a wake-up call.

THE herd instinct is so deeply ingrained on Wall Street that traders not only buy and sell the same shares at the same time, they also mimic each other's language. As the Dow Jones Industrial Average tumbled five hundred and twelve points on Monday, August 31st, the word went from trading floor to trading floor that what was happening was a "global margin call," in which investors from Frankfurt to Fargo were being forced to sell stocks in order to raise cash. The phrase "margin call," with its connotation of bankrupt investors leaping from skyscrapers in the fall of 1929, increased the sense of panic as the Dow recorded its second-largest point drop in history, but it was misleading. Total margin debt is only about one per cent of the market's value, and the vast majority of individual investors don't have any brokers' loans. True, many "hedge funds"—another misnomer, since these are the riskiest of investment vehicles, and relatively few individuals invest in them—were forced to unload stocks, but much of the selling pressure came from big mutual-fund companies, such as Fidelity and Putnam, which warehouse millions of individual retirement plans.

What really happened in the days before last Monday was that a good number of people made the sensible decision to take some of their stock-market winnings off the table. Since the end of 1994, investors have secured an unprecedented stock-market windfall of four and a half trillion dollars, and the stock market has become wildly overvalued. By shifting some of their newfound wealth from stock funds to money-market funds, investors translated paper gains into hard cash. This portfolio shift forced the mutual-fund giants to sell many of the blue-chip issues they had previously bought with their clients' money—companies like Microsoft, Walt Disney, Coca-Cola, and Gillette—and the sight of these issues tumbling spooked Wall Street veterans. It is a matter of religious faith among professional investors that stocks like these are not subject to Newton's laws. (After all, Warren Buffett owns many of them.) The Dow's renewed slide late last week demonstrated that this belief has been called into question, and this suggests there are almost certainly further falls ahead. That isn't the only reason last week was significant: it also punctured several other economic illusions that had characterized the post-Cold War era.

One is the myth of eternal prosperity. Wall Street is far from infallible—the economist Paul Samuelson once quipped that the stock market has forecast nine

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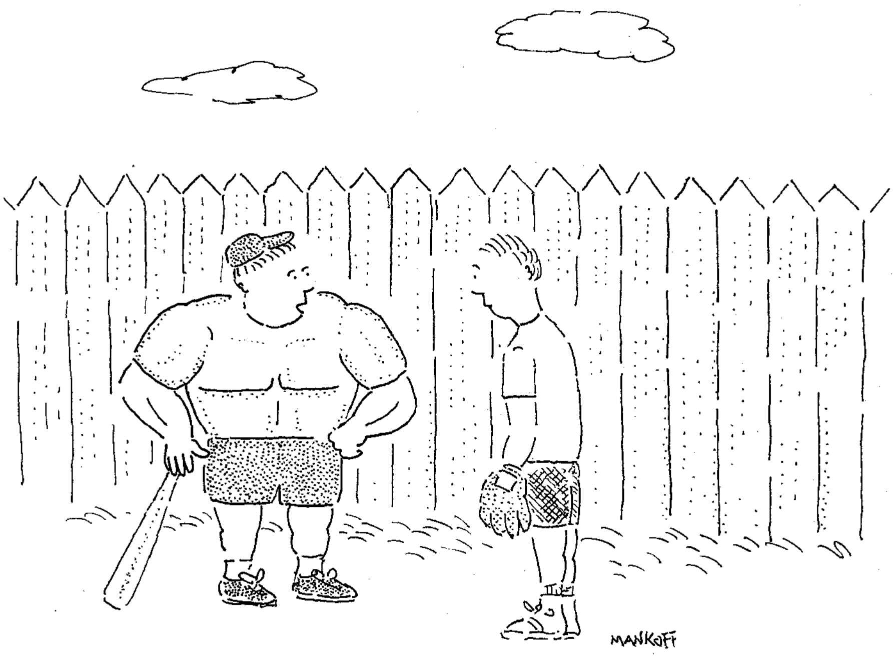
of the last five recessions—but recent events indicate that we may be on the brink of an economic downturn. The companies hardest hit in the sell-off included those most sensitive to the business cycle—companies such as real-estate developers, banks, airlines, and media conglomerates. In Asia, where the economy is already in deep recession, companies like these are on their backs. Note to Mayor Giuliani: New York's renaissance is based on these industries. If they do tank, you will have a lot more to worry about than scantily clad young women cavorting before middle-aged men. Note to President Clinton: ditto.

A second damaging but widespread belief is that the United States can prosper while the rest of the world, or a good part of it, suffers. Some people argue that, since exports make up less than twelve per cent of the American economy, what happens abroad doesn't matter much: if American consumers and American businesses keep spending, everything will be just fine. This logic no longer makes sense, if it ever did. Many American firms depend on foreign sales for their profits, and some of them—Intel, I.B.M., Citicorp, Boeing—have already warned that the downturn in Asia and Russia is hurting them. But it isn't only corporations that suffer. The last few weeks have demonstrated that, in our wired world, economic shocks overseas are transmitted instantly to American financial markets, and thereby to American consumers, whose future livelihood depends on their 401-K plans. Isolationism, like Luddism, isn't a practical option.

The third, and perhaps most pernicious, myth to have taken hold in the decade since Communism collapsed is that untrammelled global capitalism always produces desirable results. This musty idea, which had been discredited as long ago as the nineteen-thirties, was shined up by the Bush Administration and promulgated with equal enthusiasm by Bill Clinton's economic team and its subalterns at the International Monetary Fund. Recent events have tempered this enthusiasm, but the dogma still hasn't been officially disavowed by the White House: this despite the fact that Thailand, Korea, and Indonesia—three countries that followed the I.M.F.'s advice and abolished barriers to foreign investment during the early nineteen-nineties—are now suffering recessions whose like hasn't been seen in decades. (In Indonesia, the economy has fallen faster than the United States economy did in the Great Depression.) China, which maintains extensive controls on how money can move in and out of the country, is still enjoying economic growth, albeit at a lower rate than it did previously.

To the extent that these three beliefs underpinned the great bull market, their demise is bad news for investors. But, since they were only illusions, their passing is no cause for regret. At some point, everyone, even if he holds Amazon.com, has to face reality. —JOHN CASSIDY



"Sosa's great, but McGwire is my hero."

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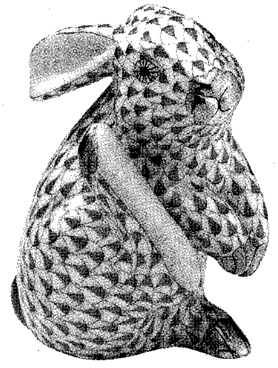

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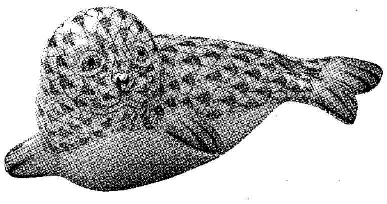

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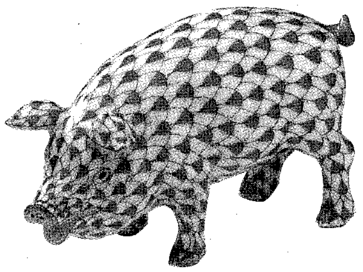

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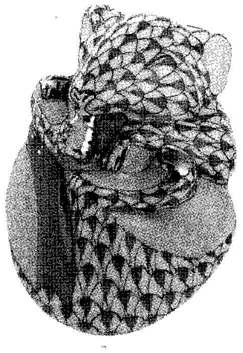

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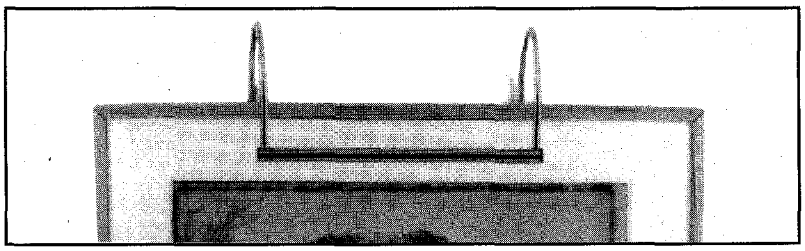

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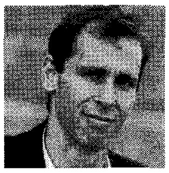

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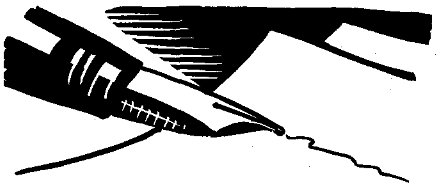
THE MAIL



TEACH YOUR CHILDREN WELL

Malcolm Gladwell's "Do Parents Matter?" (August 17th) presents Judith Rich Harris's theory that peers influence a child's personality more than parents. Definitive research, however, shows that children learn the basics of how to think in the first three years of life, when the brain grows most rapidly. During this time, a child's interactions, which are primarily with his parents, literally wire his brain, filling in the broad outline of the genetic blueprint. Over the past twenty-five years, research (including my own) has mapped out in some detail how these early interactions enable the child to comprehend sights, sounds, and emotions, to begin to communicate, and to relate to others. The article confuses these basics with *what* a child thinks—attitudes and values learned in later childhood—and, in doing so, ignores not only the research but also common sense about the importance of parents.

STANLEY I. GREENSPAN, M.D.
Bethesda, Md.

I was intrigued by Judith Rich Harris's theory, but it left me with the nagging question "Which comes first, the peer group or the personality?" When siblings with the same parental influences choose very different peer groups, I suspect that personality is the answer.

KATRINA S. FIRLIK, M.D.
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Ms. Harris's theory seems to have originated in her own experience with her troublesome adopted daughter, Elaine, and her model natural child, Nomi. Surely you don't need to be a child psychologist to see that a child reared from the age of six, as Elaine was, by a mother who has "pneumonia, a heart murmur, pulmonary hypertension, shingles, a year of chronic hives, and a minor stroke" is hardly receiving "the same kind of environment" as a child like Nomi, who reaches the age of ten with a healthy mother. As for other differences between the two, it's clear that a sibling may choose to become the family rebel when the role of "good daughter" is already taken. It appears that Harris and her theories supporting nature over nurture have arrived at an opportune time to provide a useful apologia for those adoptive parents who have discovered that the accessory baby they brought home during the acquisitive eighties may be a tad more trouble than a designer handbag.

ANNE BEATTS
Los Angeles, Calif.

If Ms. Harris is right, and peer groups *are* a main environmental engine for creating personality and character, that does not reduce the necessity of parental commitment but merely relocates it: parents must positively influence, as much as they can, the peer group to which their children are exposed.

SAMUEL BELL
Raleigh, N.C.

It has been my observation that behaviors modelled by parents are often shunned by adolescents but reassert themselves once the adolescents develop maturity. It could be that Ms. Harris's daughter Elaine eventually dropped out of her "delinquent subgroup" because Harris and her husband had done "all the right things," giving both their daughters a stable base to return to.

ANNA HEFFERNAN
Cranston, R.I.

Malcolm Gladwell replies:

The first letter-writer's argument, that the first three years of life are critical for brain formation, is addressed by Ms. Harris in her book, "The Nurture Assumption." She points to research, obviously done by scientists other than Dr. Greenspan, suggesting that that period in child development may not be so critical after all. I would encourage those readers unconvinced by my brief account of Harris's theory to read her book for themselves.

Letters should be sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number to "The Mail," The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. They can also be faxed to 212-840-8489 or sent via E-mail to themail@newyorker.com. Letters may be edited for length and clarity, and may be published in any medium; we regret that owing to the volume of correspondence we cannot reply to every letter.

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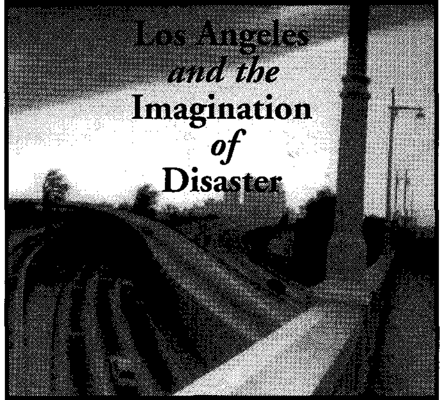

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A FALL PREVIEW

DUPUY-BERBERIAN

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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13	14	15				

THE THEATRE

In the Wings

New York's fall theatre scene, which is usually slow to kindle, gets off to a cracking start next week with the Signature Theatre Company's John Guare season. Ever since Guare began staging plays as a kid in a friend's garage, his comic imagination has been attracting audiences. The Signature is reviving two of Guare's plays from the seventies, "Marco Polo Sings a Solo" (which begins performances Sept. 15) and, my personal favorite, "Bosoms and Neglect" (Dec. 1). Charles Ludlam's 1984 Ridiculous Theatrical Company classic, "The Mystery of Irma Vep," gets its high camp revived at the Westside Theatre (Sept. 11). Terrence McNally's "Corpus Christi," which is being staged by Joe Mantello and which tells the tale of a young gay wayfarer's spiritual journey, has already—sight unseen—made headlines around the world. After receiving a phone threat to "exterminate every member of the theatre and burn the place to the ground," the Manhattan Theatre Club, displaying all the backbone of a chocolate éclair, dropped the play and then repented its timidity. It will finally appear at M.T.C., beginning Sept. 22. At the Roundabout, the sparky Holly Hunter adds her film-star amperage to Beth Henley's new offering, "Impossible Marriage," which spins a tale about a young woman's marriage to a balding, philandering, older man and how it affects their families (Sept. 22). Two other fine film actors—Frances McDormand and Billy Crudup—are featured in the Blue Light Theatre Company's "Oedipus," a retelling of the Greek myth (Sept. 20).

Last year's Broadway attendance was more than the combined attendance of all New York's professional sports teams. For a producer, it's as hard to get a Broadway theatre as it is a ticket to the Knicks. The only major new fall musical is the Livent-developed "Parade," which is scheduled to begin performances Nov. 12 at Lincoln Center Theatre's Vivian Beaumont; it tells the true story of a Jewish factory worker in the South accused of murdering a thirteen-year-old girl, in 1913. The words and music are by Jason Robert Brown, with a book by Alfred Uhry; the director is Hal Prince, one of the remaining maestros of the genre. George C. Wolfe's peppy revival of Comden and Green's "On the Town," which wowed them in Central Park last year, is set to do it again when it settles in at the Gershwin on Oct. 20; it boasts new choreography by Keith Young, and Lea DeLaria reprising her boffo performance as Hildy. The comedienne Sandra Bernhard may have lips that could suck-start a Harley-Davidson, but it's her sharp tongue that has found her an avid downtown audience. In October, she brings her tongue and chic uptown to the Booth in an updated version of her droll one-woman show "I'm Still Here . . . Damn It!"

What would a new season be without its heavyweight English imports? In January at the Roundabout, Harold Pinter's short but powerful "Ashes to Ashes" makes its American début, with the scintillating Lindsay Duncan, who originated the role in London. It is directed by Karel Reisz, who since retiring from filmmaking has become one of Pinter's most masterly interpreters. Another English troupe well worth seeing is Shared Experience, whose "Anna Karenina" comes to the Brooklyn Academy of Music in November. This elegant, exciting production is directed by Nancy Meckler, an American who for decades has been doing consistently good work across the pond. —John Lahr

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

Candida—The Pearl Theatre Company begins the season with Shaw's 1903 play about marriage. Clare Davidson is the director. In previews through Sept. 13. Opens Sept. 14 at 7. (80 St. Marks Pl. 598-9802.)

Caught in the Act—The Threshold Theatre's festival of international one-acts, by playwrights both well known (Arthur Schnitzler, Fernando Arrabal, Dario Fo) and obscure. Opens Sept. 10 at 8 and continues through Oct. 4. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 647-0202.)

Culture of Desire—The life of Andy Warhol and Dante's "Inferno" inspired the director Anne Bogart's play, her second installment in the Saratoga International Theatre Institute's two-part examination of American popular culture. In previews. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 460-5475.)

Darling of the Day—The York Theatre Company's Musicals in Mufti series of overlooked works opens with a concert production of Jule Styne and Yip Harburg's 1968 musical, about a famous artist who assumes the identity of his recently deceased butler in order to escape fame. Sept. 11 at 8, Sept. 12 at 2:30 and 8, and Sept. 13 at 2:30. (Theatre at St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 935-5820.)

A Dream of Wealth—Arthur Giron's drama about an American entrepreneur in Guatemala incorporates masks, music, and ritual movement. Previews begin Sept. 13. (46 Walker Street Theatre, 46 Walker St. 421-1380.)

International Festival of Puppet Theatre—The biennial series of avant-garde works begins Sept. 9 and continues through Sept. 27, with twenty-eight productions—including "A Harlot's Progress," by New York's Theodora Skipitares; "Kwaidan," by Atlanta's Center for Puppetry Arts; "Ubu and the Truth Commission," by South Africa's Handspring Puppet Company; and "Short Stories," by Peru's Teatro Hugo & Ines—staged at seventeen venues throughout the city. (For more information about performances and venues, call 439-7529, ext. 1998.)

Marco Polo Sings a Solo—The Signature Theatre Company opens its John Guare season with the playwright's 1977 comedy, in which a filmmaker, working on an iceberg at the end of the millennium, takes on the life story of the Italian explorer. Previews begin Sept. 15. (555 W. 42nd St. 244-7529.)

The Mystery of Irma Vep—A revival of Charles Ludlam's 1984 camp thriller, directed by and starring Everett Quinton (who appeared with Ludlam in the original Ridiculous Theatrical Company production) and Stephen DeRosa. With sets by John Lee Beatty and costumes by William Ivey Long. Previews begin Sept. 11. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.)

A Night in November—A one-man drama by Marie Jones, which is set on the night of the 1994 World Cup qualifying soccer match between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Previews begin Sept. 11. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

The Secret History of the Lower East Side—En Garde Arts continues its tradition of site-specific stagings with an evening of commissioned one-acts ("The Patron Saint of the Nameless Dead," by Carlos Murillo; "New Culture for a New Country," by Alice Tuan; and "Hester Street Hideaway: A Lower East Side Love Story," by Peter Ullian), performed on the roof of Seward Park High School and accompanied by a chorus of Lower East Siders and Seward Park students. Directed by Matt Wilder. In previews through Sept. 12. Opens Sept. 13 at 8. (350 Grand St., at Essex St. 279-4200.)

The Uneasy Chair—The owner of a boarding house (Dana Ivey) in Victorian London sues her ill-tempered boarder (Roger Rees), in a new comedy by Evan Smith. Previews begin Sept. 11. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

Vegetable Love—The 29th Street Rep. presents a surrealistic drama about an Irish-American family in the aftermath of the father's death, written by Tammy Ryan. Previews begin Sept. 11. (212 W. 29th St. 465-0575.)

The Weatherbox—Rattlestick Productions' season opener is a family drama by Travis Baker. Previews Sept. 10-12. Opens Sept. 13 at 3. (Theatre Off Park, 224 Waverly Pl., at 11th St. 675-5634.)

Wit—MCC Theatre presents the Long Wharf Theatre's staging of a dark comedy by Margaret Edson, in which a woman with cancer (Kathleen Chalfant) finds solace in the sonnets of John Donne. Previews begin Sept. 9. (120 W. 28th St. 727-7765.)

Zingaro—The French equestrian troupe returns to New York with "Eclipse," a new show featuring twenty-six horses, eighteen performers, and a Korean folk-music ensemble. Opens Sept. 9 at 8:30. (Big Top at Battery Park City. 718-636-4100.)

OPENED RECENTLY

Black Mask—Damon Kiely and Frank Bradley's noir thriller about a lonely private dick looking for love. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 533-4650. Closes Sept. 13.)

Bread and Butter—Playwrights Theatre presents Eugene O'Neill's early play. (Provincetown Playhouse, 133 MacDougal St. 279-4200. Closes Sept. 11.)

Colin Quinn: An Irish Wake—The "Saturday Night Live" star's multicharacter one-man show was inspired by the Brooklyn neighborhood he lived in during the seventies. (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Closes Sept. 19.)

Collected Stories—In a splendid performance, Uta Hagen plays an aging writer who tells her protégée (Lorca Simons) the one story about her own life which she hasn't written. Complications, naturally, ensue. Unfortunately, other than providing a showcase for Ms. Hagen, this revival of Donald Margulies's 1997 drama only points out how poorly constructed the relationship between the two women is, and it is made even less believable by Ms. Simons' overly mannered, pouty acting. Directed by William Carden, with a marvellous, airy set by Ray Recht. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)

Communicating Doors—A delightful farce with a fairy-tale ending, by Alan Ayckbourn. As with all good farce, the central conceit is serious and quite ridiculous at the same time; in this case, it involves murder and time travel. An exuberant cast, led by the wittily unflappable Patricia Hodges and including Mary-Louise Parker and David McCallum, makes the most of David Gallo's lovely set (which has six doors, good for slamming, hiding behind, and hitting miscreants with). Christopher Ashley's direction makes the precise framework of the plot clear without ever dampening the high spirits. (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 13th St. 239-6200.)

Deep Down—Ruben Santiago-Hudson stars in a drama by Doug Grissom, set in the South in 1963, about a black ex-convict and his white employer. (INTAR, 420 W. 42nd St. 935-9430, ext. 10. Closes Sept. 14.)

Dinah Was—Oliver Goldstick's play about the late blues singer Dinah Washington, starring Lillias White. (Gramercy Theatre, 127 E. 23rd St. 307-4100.)

If I Were You—3-Legged Dog's latest multimedia production, a crime story incorporating elements of English farce and French melodrama. Sept. 9-12 at 8. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793.)

The Irish . . . and How They Got That Way—This revue by Frank McCourt, author of the best-selling memoir "Angela's Ashes," is a generally good-natured if somewhat choppy amalgam of historical tidbits, quotations from letters and speeches, and Irish songs from the past two centuries. (Irish Repertory Theatre, 132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737.)

Nijinsky Speaks—A one-man memory play, written and performed by Leonard Crofoot, in which the celebrated dancer looks back on his life from the confines of an insane asylum. (Harold Clurman, 412 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.)

Nunsense A-Men—An all-male version of Dan Goggin's 1985 musical comedy, "Nunsense." (47th Street Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

Power Plays—Three short plays, two written by Elaine May and one by Alan Arkin, who perform them with Jeannie Berlin and Anthony Arkin, their respective offspring. All of the plays are too long, but the comic brilliance of May and Arkin père (who also directed) is worth, at a rough estimate, ten million times the price of admission. Presented by Manhattan Theatre Club. The show goes on hiatus Sept. 13-21, after which time Richard Benjamin and Paula Prentiss will take over for Mr. Arkin and Ms. May. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

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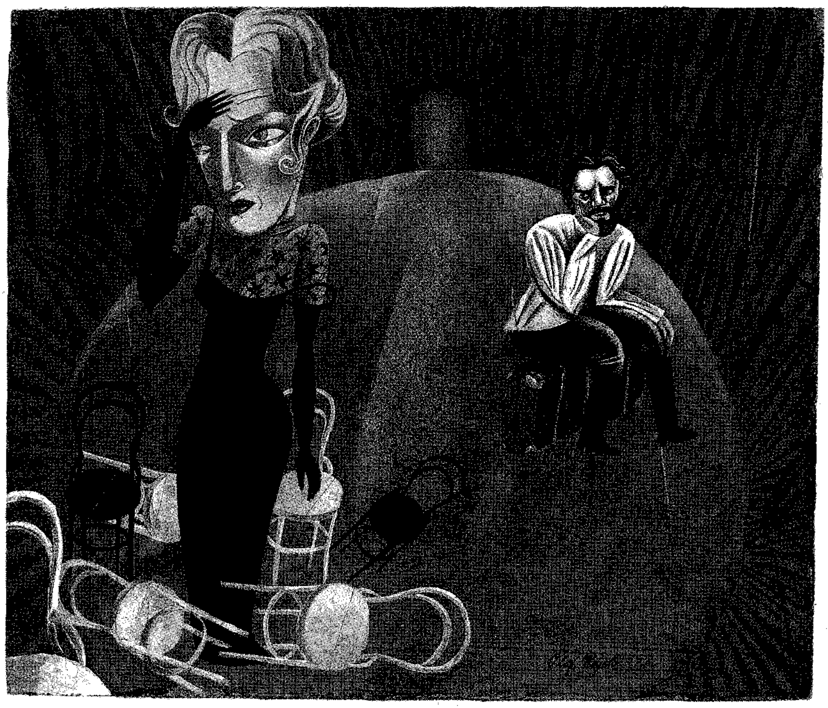
Sakina's Restaurant—Aasif Mandvi portrays six characters in his one-man exploration of the South Asian community in New York. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 239-6200.)

Side Man—The Roundabout Theatre presents Warren Leight's drama, which was staged earlier this year Off Broadway. It's a nostalgic but never sappy paean to the musical obsessiveness and worldly indifference of mid-century big-band musicians, cleverly structured as the recollections of one musician's put-upon son. Solidly directed by Michael Mayer. (Broadway at 45th St. 719-1300. Closes Sept. 13.)

Smoke on the Mountain—In this sweet and funny musical comedy, set on a Saturday night in June, 1938, the Mount Pleasant (North Carolina) Baptist Church awaits the arrival of the Sanders Family singers and musicians. The show features Mike Craver and Mark Hardwick's tuneful, often bluegrass arrangements of songs like "Bringing in the Sheaves," "I'll Fly Away," and "Rock of Ages." (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)



Teresa Banham and Richard Hope, in "Anna Karenina," a Shared Experience staging of Tolstoy's novel, coming to BAM this fall.

OLAF HAJEK

The Sound of Music—Rebecca Luker is enormously winning as Maria, and the seven children in the cast are mostly delightful, but the production doesn't linger in the memory; there may be music in those hills, but the producers didn't seem to find a whole lot of fresh air up there. (Reviewed in our issue of 4/6/98.) (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Stupid Kids—The WPA Theatre's production of John C. Russell's dark comedy of suburban-teen angst. Michael Mayer is the director. (Century Theatre, 111 E. 15th St. 239-6200.)

Symphonie Fantastique—Abstract puppets underwater, set to the music of Berlioz. This isn't rubber-duckie performance art; just as dance can make space a palpable presence onstage, the show's creator, Basil Twist, uses feathers, streamers, mirrors, bubbles, and sophisticated lighting to do the same for water. And, as in dance, the movement illuminates the music. A peerless, delightful summer evening. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 647-0202.)

They Still Mambo in Havana—A political drama by Rogelio Martinez, in which Cuban exiles attempt to return home. (The Flea, 41 White St., between Broadway and Church St. 226-0051. Closes Sept. 27.)

The Tramway End—A drama by Dermot Bolger, about an Irish expatriate living in Germany. (Chelsea Playhouse, 125 W. 22nd St. 388-2806. Closes Sept. 20.)

Villa Villa—Theatre as mosh pit. The Argentinean troupe De La Guarda herds you into a crowded space, performs undistinguished rock music, swings on ropes over your head, and splashes you until you're drenched. (Daryl Roth, 20 Union Sq. E., at 15th St. 239-6200.)

You Shouldn't Have Told—A drama about an urban, middle-class black family touched by sexual abuse, written by Anne L. Thompson-Scretching. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

LONG RUNS

ART: Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **BEAUTY AND THE BEAST:** Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100. . . . **THE BEAUTY QUEEN OF LEENANE:** Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **BRING IN DA NOISE, BRING IN DA FUNK:** Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **CABARET:** Kit Kat Klub, 124 W. 43rd St. 719-1300. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CHICAGO:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY STRIKES BACK!:** Stardust, Broadway at 51st St. 239-6200. . . . **GROSS INDECENCY: THE THREE TRIALS OF OSCAR WILDE:** Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000. (Closes Sept. 13.) . . . **HEDWIG AND THE ANGRY INCH:** Jane Street Theatre, Hotel Riverview Ballroom, 113 Jane St. 239-6200. . . . **I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE PERFECT, NOW CHANGE:** Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200. . . . **JEKYLL & HYDE:** Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **LATE-NITE CATECHISM:** St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE LION KING:** New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 307-4100. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **RAGTIME:** Ford Center for the Performing Arts, 213 W. 42nd St. 307-4100. . . . **R & J:** John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 354-2220. . . . **RENT:** Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000. . . . **THE SCARLET PIMPERNEL:** Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4100. . . . **SECRETS EVERY SMART TRAVELER SHOULD KNOW:** Triad, 158 W. 72nd St. 799-4599. . . . **SMOKEY JOE'S CAFÉ:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. . . . **STOMP:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. 477-2477. . . . **TITANIC:** Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4100. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 239-6200. . . . **VISITING MR. GREEN:** Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 505-0700.

DANCE

"Dream Analysis"—The prolific choreographer Mark Dendy came up with his fifteen-character, full-length Freudian dance comedy after he stumbled upon a New Age workbook for artists who are stuck. "One of the assignments was to write three pages a day. I thought, I'm an artist. I don't need to make collages! But I did it." The result—a rollicking sendup of the memoir form which includes duelling Martha Grahams and twin Nijinskys, four plot lines, and the freewheeling logic of dreams—premièred this past January at the Altogether Different festival and opens the fall season at Dance Theatre Workshop. "It still awes me," says Dendy, a onetime resident of Weaverville, North Carolina. "I mean, what would Mom even think?" (219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Sept. 8-12 at 8.)

"Safe Harbor"—In a site-specific performance that takes the audience along the Red Hook waterfront into a harbor barge, then back through the neighboring streets to Pier 41, the choreographer Martha Bowers and her company, Dance/Theatre/Etcetera, weave together various dance and theatrical traditions to tell the story of the Irish, Italian, Puerto Rican, and African-American people who have called the area home. (Pier 41, 204-207 Van Dyke St., Brooklyn. Sept. 12-13 at 7. No tickets necessary; for reservations for bus transportation from Brooklyn or Manhattan, call 989-6830. Through Sept. 20.)

"Dance Now 98"—The Downtown Arts Festival calls in the troupes for a fortnight of dance. Sept. 9, from 6:30: Preview performances from Pamela Warshay & Daniel Gwirtzman, Jennifer Muller/The Works, and others. (Chelsea Piers, 23rd St., at the West Side Highway.) . . . ¶ Sept 10, from 6:30: Tango night with Valeria Solomonoff. (550 Broadway, third floor.) . . . ¶ Sept. 11 at 7 and 9: Terry Hollis, Frances Alenikoff & Kenneth King, and Amos Pinhasi, among others. (Joyce SoHo, 155 Mercer St.) . . . ¶ Sept. 12: An all-star series, with performances hourly from 1 to 8. (Carmine Recreation Center. Seventh Ave. S. at Clarkson St.) . . . ¶ Sept. 13, at 2:30: Previews of "Expect the Unexpected," by David Parker & Sara Hook. (550 Broadway, third floor.) . . . At 3: Excerpts from "Palace of Not Even Anything," a work in progress by Karen Graham and Mark Jarecke. (Danspace Project, St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St.) . . . ¶ Sept. 15 at 6:30: Buglisi/Foreman Dance, Kristin Eliasberg, and David Parker and the Bang Group, among others. (OK Harris, 383 West Broadway.) (For complete program information, call 925-4200. Tickets available at the door.)

Diversity of Dance—The twelve-member company, with dancers on loan from Bill T. Jones, Alvin Ailey, Ron Brown, Donald Byrd, and Kevin Wynn, performs in six pieces by Earl Mosley, including "Black Pearls II," "Pass It On," and "Far Corners." (Evolving Arts Theatre, 622 Broadway, sixth floor. 426-1305. Sept. 11-12 at 8:30 and Sept. 13 at 3.)

Pilar Rioja—The contessa of Spanish dance returns for her twenty-sixth season with a program rich in works inspired by Federico Garcia Lorca to celebrate the centennial of his birth. (Repertorio Español, Gramercy Arts Theatre, 138 E. 27th St. 889-2850. Sept. 9-10 and Sept. 13 at 7 and Sept. 12 at 8. Through Oct. 4.)

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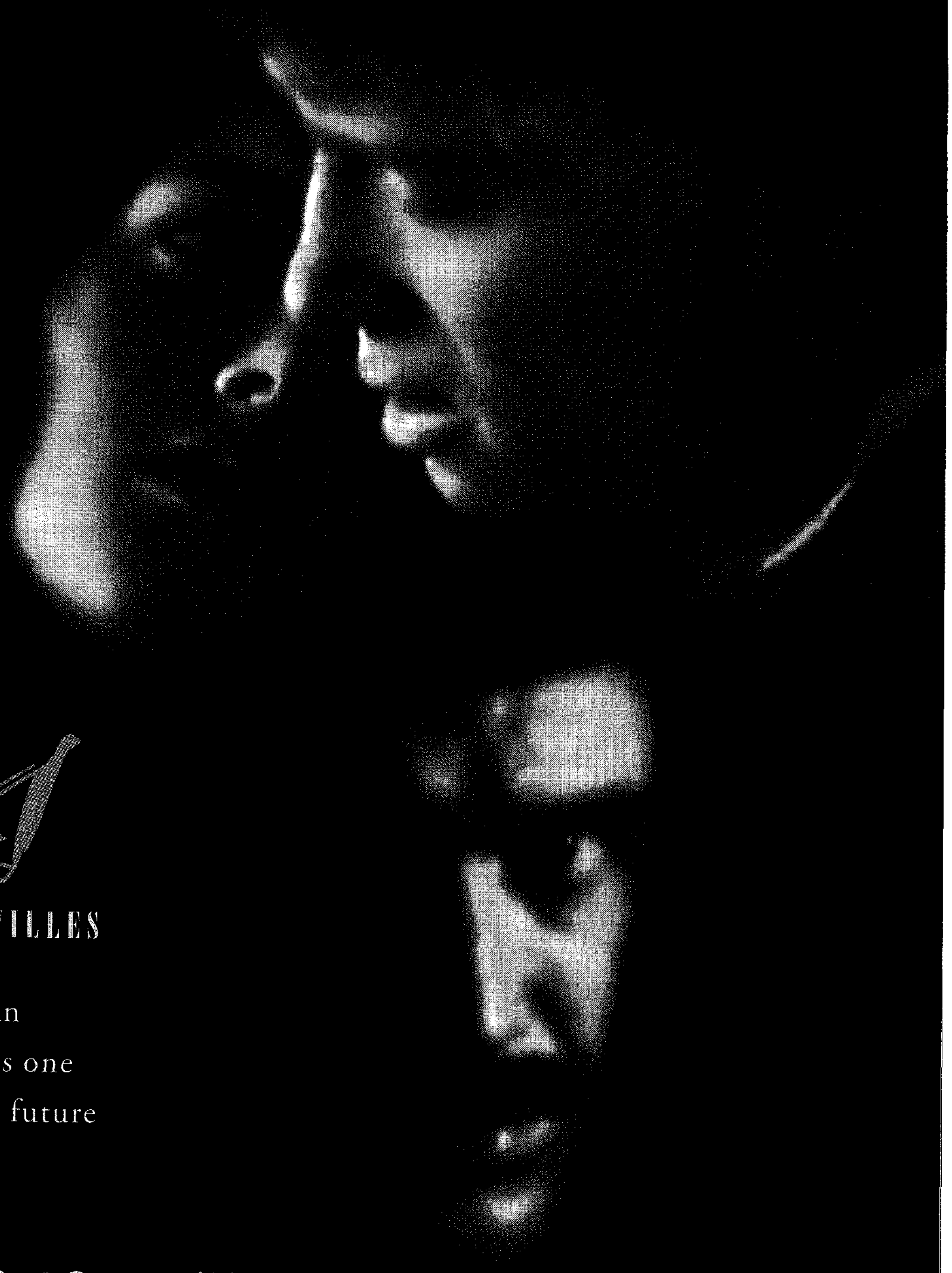
she must confront her past.



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NIGHT LIFE

CONCERTS

B. B. King Blues Music Festival—An evening of soul and suffering with King and Dr. John, and an ameliorative interruption by the Neville Brothers. Storyville and Jonny Lang round out the bill. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Sept. 9 at 7.... ¶ Jones Beach Theatre. 516-221-1000. Sept. 12 at 6:30.)

Jazz at Lincoln Center—Way back when in New Orleans, Jelly Roll Morton used to call it "the Spanish tinge," those tangy syncopations, derived from Latin cultures, that seeped into, and strengthened, the foundations of jazz. Although Latin rhythms have indeed surfaced throughout jazz's hasty evolution, it wasn't until the late forties, with the explosion of Afro-Cuban jazz, that the tropical beat came to the fore. The chief architects of that sound, Dizzy Gillespie, Machito, Tito Puente, Mario Bauza, and Chico O'Farrill among them, fashioned an ensemble style that enlivened modern jazz and paved the way for salsa and contemporary Latin music. Wynton Marsalis and the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra will dig deep into the groove, with assistance from guest conductors Ray Santos and O'Farrill. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. Sept. 10-12 at 8.)

Bauhaus—The grandfathers of goth return to bite the neck of New York: for some, a major event. Monotone singer Peter Murphy rejoins his former band mates (who were, until recently, Love & Rockets) to sing about, among other things, the death of Bela Lugosi. Break out your black cape. (Hammerstein Ballroom, Manhattan Center, 311 W. 34th St. 564-4882. Sept. 10-11 at 9:30.)

Pearl Jam—Talk about a market correction. These grunge trailblazers, once the country's most popular band, now exist in commercial limbo; the group's latest record, "Yield," isn't even in the Top 100. But the experience has been oddly positive: the infamous Eddie Vedder bombast has a new, humble edge, and, onstage at least, the band is as easy to ignore as a hurricane. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. Sept. 10-11 at 8.)

Roni Ben-Hur Trio with Etta Jones—The Israeli guitarist and the veteran jazz vocalist. (Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. 708-9491. Sept. 11 at 5:30.)

Slayer—Old-fashioned, blood-and-guts death metal. With Fear Factory and Kilgor. (Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. 307-7171. Sept. 11 at 7:30.)

Maná—Spanish rock with Mexico's most popular band. (The Theatre at Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. Sept. 11 at 8:30.)

Massive Attack—This trip-hop collective from the fecund city of Bristol has turned what might be labelled dance music into a laboratory for emotion and introspection. The group's wide-ranging influence can be detected on Madonna's latest album, among many others. (Hammerstein Ballroom, Manhattan Center. Sept. 12 at 9.)

Alabina—The ensemble that puts the world in world music. Alabina's multilingual, half-Egyptian and half-Moroccan lead singer, the stunning Ishtar, was born in Israel. She sings in Arabic and Hebrew and is backed by four Gypsies, who sing in Spanish. To top it off, they hail from France. With the Lebanese pop sensation Rabih El Khaouli. (Beacon Theatre. Sept. 13 at 7.)

Byron Stripling and Luca Velotti—The trumpeter and the Italian saxophonist, in concert, accompanied by tap dancers. Presented by the Sidney Bechet Society. (The Theatre at the Greenwich Village Center, 219 Sullivan St. For information about tickets, call 516-627-4468. Sept. 14 at 6 and 8:30.)

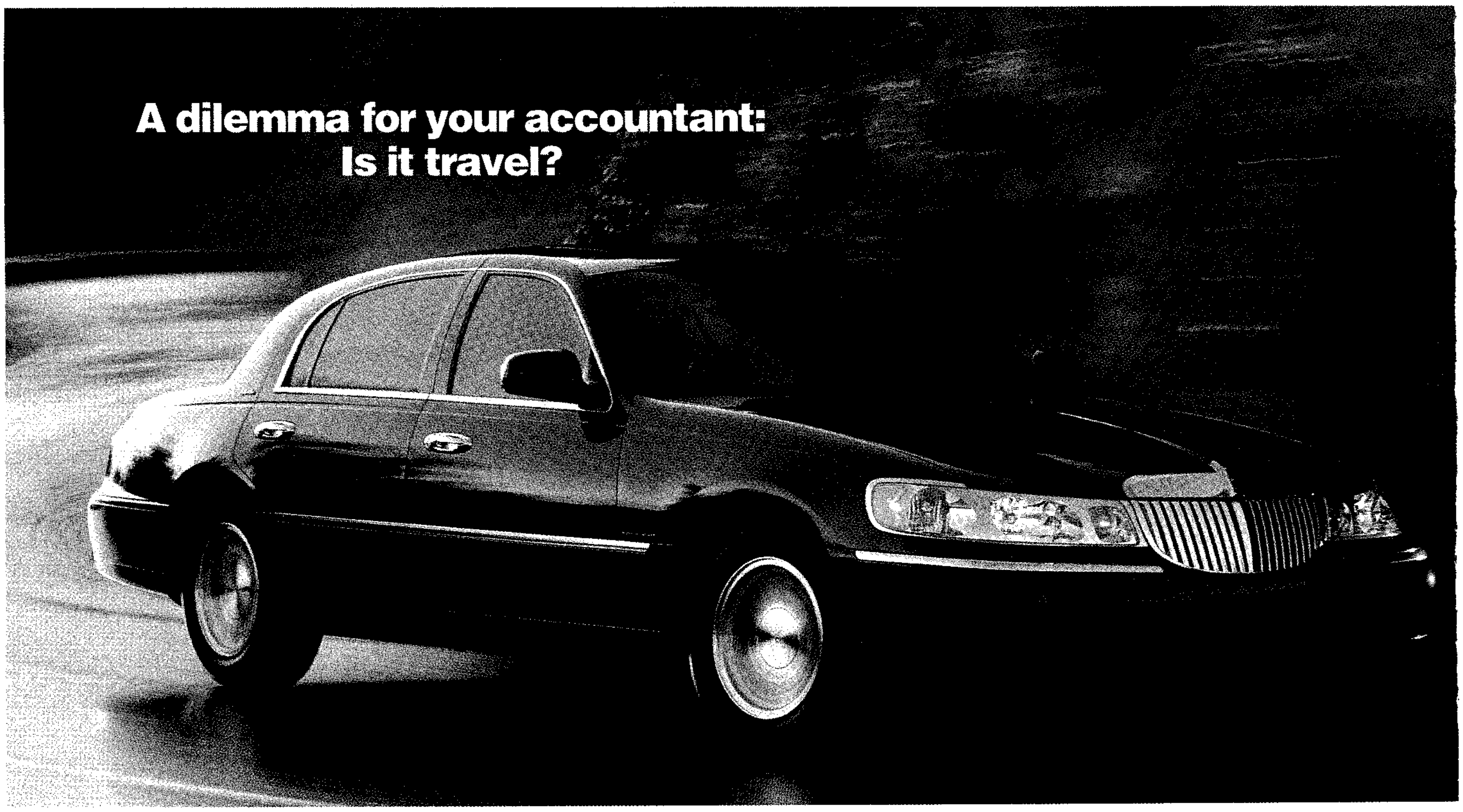
JAZZ AND STANDARDS

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—The chanteuse **MARY CLEERE HARAN** is in through Oct. 10, with a tribute to George Gershwin. Dining.

Birdland, 315 W. 44th St. (581-3080)—Sept. 9-12: The **JAMES MOODY** quartet. Instrumental virtuosos aren't always a serious lot; James Moody spins out warped one-liners and surrealist anecdotes as easily as he does serpentine bebop lines on saxophone and flute. Although he's a fleet alto saxophonist and a pensive soprano player, Moody's most significant work has come from the tenor sax. On that horn, you can hear all that he's absorbed, from his days as a featured soloist in Dizzy Gillespie's late-forties big band to Moody's own funky ensembles of the fifties to another stint with Dizzy, as an integral component of the trumpeter's small sixties group. Since then, he has yet to stop investigating the improvisational byways of modern jazz. Humor, for Moody, is just a tool to keep his audience's awe at bay. Sept. 13: The **CHICO O'FARRILL AFRO-CUBAN JAZZ BIG BAND.** Sept. 14: The **TOSHIKO AKIYOSHI JAZZ ORCHESTRA.** Sept. 15: The **BOBBY WATSON TAILOR-MADE BIG BAND.** Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—For decades, **LARRY CARLTON** (in through Sept. 13) was best known as a preëminent session guitarist: he could be heard on everything from Steely Dan records to TV theme songs. A few years back, he suffered nerve damage from a gunshot wound, which nearly ended his career. After extensive rehab, he's back, and he now plays with an evangelical fire. Dining.



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LINCOLN

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters and wraparound pastel murals. **WOODY ALLEN AND THE EDDY DAVIS NEW ORLEANS JAZZ BAND** are in on Monday nights, starting Sept. 14. **BARBARA COOK** takes up residence for a month, starting Sept. 15. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, **PETER MINTUN** presides at the piano through Oct. 10.

Druids, 736 10th Ave., at 50th St. (307-6410)—Dark and neighborhoody atmosphere; bar-and-grill fare. Pianist **SPIKE WILNER** and his trio hold forth on Saturdays.

Iridium, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Trumpeter **DAVE DOUGLAS** (through Sept. 13) bridges the gap between tradition and innovation, and his music is always engaging, and often glorious. His ensemble for this engagement is the fierce, pianoless quartet he recently put together, which features the compelling saxophonist **CHRIS POTTER** and the slamming rhythm team of bassist **JAMES GENUS** and drummer **BILLY DRUMMOND.** Mondays belong to electric-guitar innovator **LES PAUL.**

Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St. (576-2232)—Through Sept. 12: The **CHRISTIAN MC BRIDE** quartet.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—Sept. 9-12: Pianist **JUDY CARMICHAEL** strides like Fats Waller's long-lost daughter, and, in saxophonist **MIKE HASHIM,** she's got a partner hooked into her preswing groove.

Lenox Lounge, 288 Lenox Ave., between 124th and 125th Sts. (427-0253)—Sept. 11-12: The husband-and-wife combo of saxophonist **HOUSTON PERSON** and vocalist **ETTA JONES.**

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza (632-5000)—The great cabaret in the sky. Through Sept. 19, the veteran songwriter and keyboardist **JIMMY WEBB,** whose hit-filled catalogue includes such far-afield classics as "Up, Up and Away," "By the Time I Get to Phoenix," and the gloriously inscrutable "MacArthur Park." . . . ¶ Across the hall, in the Rainbow Room, there's a revolving dance floor, plus swinging big-band music courtesy of the Rainbow Room Orchestra, featuring vocalists Sean Mahony and Hilary Kole. Closed Mondays.

DUPUYBERBERIAN

SOB's, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—Vibraphonist **ROY AYERS** (Sept. 11) has been given a new lease on his creative life from that most contemporary of sources: sampling. The funky jazz recordings he churned out in the seventies are now being plundered by hip-hop artists in search of old-school grooves, providing Ayers with a midlife resurgence instead of a midlife crisis.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—Through Sept. 13: The **STEVE TURRE** quintet. Turre doesn't lack scope. Our premier trombonist darts from hard-bop groups to conch-shell aggregations to big bands to Latin units, and back again. Whether coaxing extravagant melodies from his regular horn or extracting mellifluous tones from his arsenal of mollusk shells, Turre's a lusty improviser who's been a welcome presence on the bandstand since his days with Rahssan Roland Kirk in the mid-seventies. Dining.

Tonic, 107 Norfolk St. (358-7503)—Sept. 9: The **OSCAR NORIEGA** quartet. A gifted utility man for many new-jazz ensembles, the woodwinds player Noriega has proved that he's got the goods to step out on his own. A granddaddy of avant-garde jazz, vibist and pianist **KARL BERGER** (Sept. 10) remains an exacting improviser, composer, and bandleader who has maintained the edge he first brought to the music more than thirty years ago. Trumpeter **CUONG VU** (Sept. 11) is another imaginative player who is increasingly seen with some of the more provocative downtown ensembles. His own unit gives you a good idea why.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Jazz doesn't want for master pianists, but there's only one **TOMMY FLANAGAN,** who starts a two-week run on Sept. 8. Tone, touch, taste, technique—he's got it all in spades. But Flanagan's also a poet, and therein lies the key to his omnipotence. His spontaneous inventions have the formal perfection of forethought melodies yet retain the electricity of in-the-moment constructions. His choruses grip you, startle you with their beauty, and then leave you spoiled for any other pianist. Add to this Flanagan's imaginative repertoire and the alarming unity of his trio, and you have the apogee of the contemporary-jazz experience. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

Zinc Bar, 90 W. Houston St. (477-8337)—Sept. 10: The **HECTOR MARTIGNON** quartet. Sept. 14: The **RON AFFIF** quartet. A guitarist with flying fingers and a heart filled with bebop, Affif has the advantage of a regular gig at an intimate space that caters to guitar freaks. For a six-string whiz with almost too much to say, it doesn't get any better than that. Saturdays feature Brazilian jazz.

Or entertainment?

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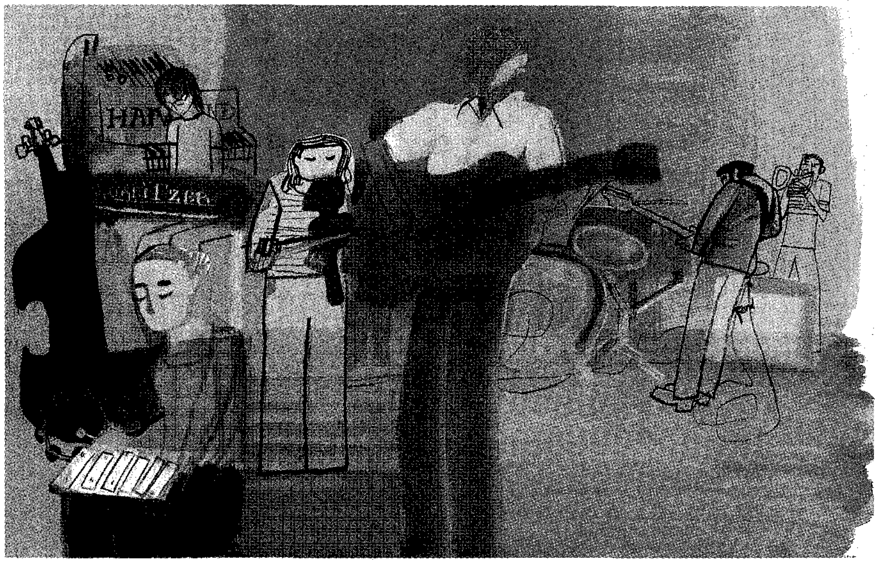


The Glaswegian octet Belle and Sebastian plays the Supper Club on November 1-2.

ANNARFI WRIGHT

ROCK, ETC.

Arlene Grocery, 95 Stanton St., between Ludlow and Orchard Sts. (358-1633)—A narrow, dimly lit renovated bodega that's the ideal environment for three to five unknown bands struggling their way out of obscurity. On Sept. 13, singer-songwriter, guitarist, and violin maker **scott goodman** and **paradox engine** light up the place with their searching, thoughtful brand of art rock.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Sept. 13: Detective novelist and country punk **kinky friedman.**

Bowery Ballroom, 6 Delancey St. (533-2111)—Sept. 9: **mudhoney.** Old grunge heroes never die; they just get fat and irrelevant. The seminal Seattle outfit that gave the world the classic "Too Drunk to Fuck" returns to its postmodern bar-band roots. Sept. 10-12: **luna,** the endlessly Velvet Underground-obsessed New York nonstarters. Sept. 15: The ironic rock of **harvey danger.**

Chez Es Saada, 42 E. 1st St. (777-5617)—The improbably grand tiled staircase brings you down to a basement transformed by scattered rose petals and golden light into the secret Tangier of Burroughs and Bowles. North African-flavored bistro fare is served throughout, d.j.s play everything from nineteen-fifties Egyptian 45s to up-to-the-minute Moroccan chaiba dance music, and you can slouch on a hassock and sip a vintage cocktail.

Chicago B.L.U.E.S., 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (924-9755)—Sept: 11-12: Former Jimi Hendrix drummer **buddy miles.**

Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—Sept. 10: The industrial pop of **gravity kills.** Sept. 11: **the crystal method.** Electronica may have failed to arrive as a commercial revolution, but this hard-hitting collective of computer jockeys knows how to dredge humanity from its machines. Bring a lava lamp and your best dancing sneakers. Sept. 12: **gov't mule** hosts an evening of Allman Brothers-style, guitar-driven indulgence. . . . ¶ The Swing Dance Society gathers here every Sunday. The dancers share a passion for the Lindy Hop, a dance that involves a lot of whirling and the occasional display of underwear. Sets from eight until midnight. For information on the society, call 696-9737.

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken (201-798-0406)—Sept. 10: **versus,** a great indie rock band with a gift for Sonic Youth-style droning. Sept. 11: **the gefkens.** Sept. 12: Kansas native **freedy johnston** churns out exacting folk-rock with a convincing Midwestern twang; his songs bristle with careful detail and piercing language. Sept. 14-15: The literate trio **yo la tengo**—the husband-and-wife team of singer Ira Kaplan and drummer Georgia Hubley, with bassist James McNew—excels in both crisp, three-minute pop songs and long, melancholy experiments.

Les Poulets, 16 W. 22nd St. (229-2000)—The name may be French, but the music here is Latin: expect salsa, merengue, and the occasional cha-cha. Dining.

Tramps, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—Sept. 10: **the knack.** The Southern California outfit that injected "My Sharona" into the national subconscious returns, poorer and wiser, to revisit past power-pop glories. Sept. 11: **brand nubian.** Sept. 14: **gillian welch,** the rock critics' It Girl of the moment (with the notable exception of Lucinda Williams), turns in a set of excoriating post-folk anthems. With the edgy urban folk stories of singer-songwriter **richard buckner.**

ART

East to West

Asian art, usually a bit player here, is doing a star turn on the New York art circuit this fall. A major exhibition of contemporary Chinese art ("Inside Out: New Chinese Art") opens on Sept. 15 at two locations: the Asia Society, at Park Avenue and 70th Street, and P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center, in Long Island City. It includes more than eighty works in traditional and non-traditional media, all of them done since 1985 by artists working in China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and elsewhere; some are by expatriates who fled China in the late nineteen-eighties. China's new wave will be closely scrutinized: Fang Lijun, a Beijing-based painter who survived the Tiananmen massacre and who has several works in the exhibition, has already been picked up by the Max Protetch Gallery, in Chelsea, which is giving him a one-man show, starting Sept. 12; his work is representative of the "Cynical Realism" movement, which, according to the gallery, is informed by the "emotional ennui and rogue humor that pervaded Chinese society in the first half of the 1990s."

Christie's inaugurates its fall auction season with three days of Asian offerings (Sept. 15-17). Tibetan art will be on view at the Metropolitan Museum ("Sacred Visions: Early Painting from Tibet," starting Oct. 6) and at the PaineWebber Art Gallery ("In the Spirit of Compassion," opening Sept. 24). The Japan Society is showing "The Art of Twentieth Century Zen" in November.

The main attraction this fall, however, is Jackson Pollock at the Museum of Modern Art (Nov. 1-Feb. 2). The first Pollock retrospective in this country since 1967, it promises a critical re-evaluation of his giant achievement, emphasizing the "remarkable degree of deliberation and control behind the apparent spontaneity of Pollock's work." With the travelling Mark Rothko retrospective on view at the Whitney (Sept. 17-Nov. 29), we'll be knee deep, for a change, in the heroic period of Abstract Expressionism. Pollock, Rothko, Picasso, Matisse, and all the other big guns of international modernism are among the more than a hundred and fifty artists in "Rendezvous: Masterpieces from Centre Georges Pompidou and the Guggenheim Museums," which opens at the Guggenheim on Oct. 16 (through Jan. 24). Some of the finest drawings in Western art will be in the Morgan Library's "Master Drawings from the Hermitage and Pushkin Museums" (Sept. 25-Jan. 10). The season's most ravishing exhibition, however, may well be one that involves no loans, no re-evaluations, and relatively little publicity. It is "From Van Eyck to Bruegel: Early Netherlandish Painting in the Metropolitan Museum of Art" (Sept. 22-Jan. 3), a convocation of the Met's incomparable holdings in that magical period—the early fifteenth century to the mid-sixteenth—when oil painting was brought to a pitch of perfection which has never been surpassed.

—Calvin Tomkins

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—"The Ceaseless Century: Three Hundred Years of Eighteenth-Century Fashion" presents period outfits with their typical extravagance of effects (petticoats, stomachers, corseted waists, panniered skirts, flared peplums, etc.) alongside examples of their continuing influence, from nineteenth-century ball gowns and walking dresses to Dior cocktail dresses and Vivienne Westwood pirate ensembles. Opens Sept. 9. . . . ¶ "The Nature of Islamic Ornament, Part II: Vegetal Patterns" identifies components of the arabesque—vine scrolls, blossoms, split leaves, and palmettes—in plant motifs from the ninth century to the eighteenth. Opens Sept. 10. . . . ¶ "Ellsworth Kelly on the Roof." Through late fall. . . . ¶ "The Direct Eye," a small and unassuming show devoted to the interplay between self-taught and mainstream artists in twentieth-century art, includes works by Horace Pippin, Max Weber, and Alison Saar. One is struck by how many formally trained artists in this group strive for sometimes cloying effects of naïveté. On the other hand, the stringently reduced forms in a drawing by Bill Traylor—a former slave who began painting late in life—seem far more in tune with the "mainstream" achievements of art in this century. Altogether, an agreeable, if rather confused, selection. Through Oct. 18. . . . ¶ "Jean Dunand (1877-1942): Master of Art Deco." Through Oct. 25. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

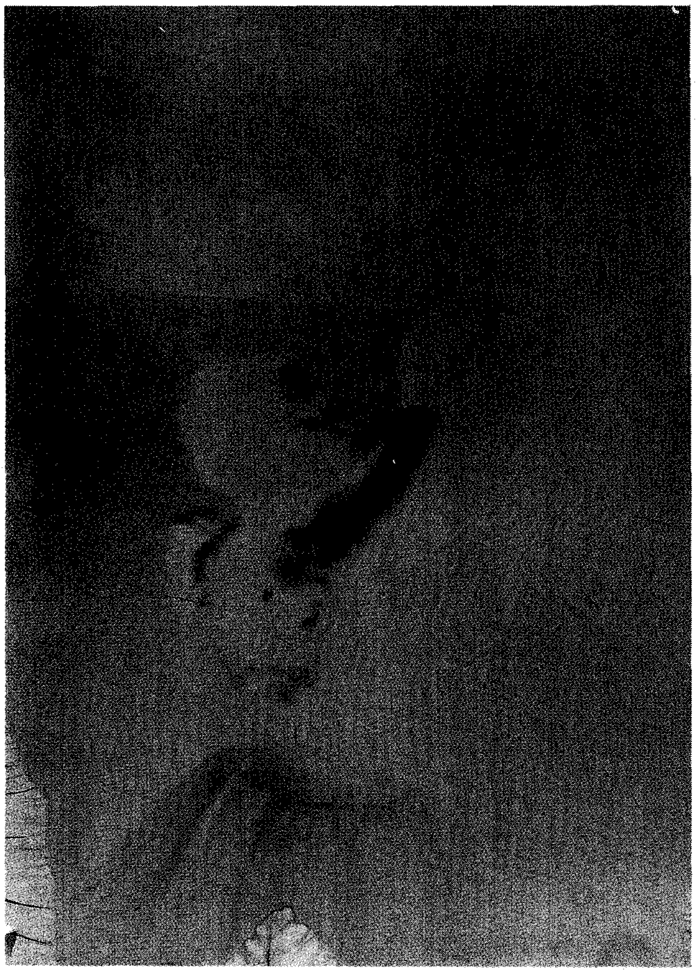
Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—For seemingly arbitrary reasons, Pierre Bonnard's genius has been reflexively measured against Picasso's, and found wanting. Proust, however, is closer to home, and this exquisite retrospective—the first here in thirty-four years—shows why: both the painter and the novelist turned the surface shimmer of bourgeois contentment into mysterious evocations of memory. Through Oct. 13. (See also Galleries—Uptown.) . . . ¶ "Love Forever: Yayoi Kusama, 1958-68." Like Yoko Ono, Kusama was a refugee from an affluent Japanese family who sought encouragement for her artistic ambitions in New York's avant-garde in the sixties. Kusama's early "infinity net" paintings found supporters in the masculine precincts ruled by such abstractionists as Donald Judd and Frank Stella, but the artist's more extreme, performance-oriented gestures—like appearing nude in many of her pieces—linked her with the radicals of that scene. In this show, which is strong on paintings, objects, and archival materials, Kusama looks like one of those seminal artists who was years ahead of her time. Some of this is due to a shift in art-world fashion, which is currently obsessed with gender, the body, and performance, but there is no doubting the bravery of Kusama's achievement. (See also Galleries—Downtown.) Through Sept. 22. . . . ¶ "Tony Smith: Architect, Painter, Sculptor." Through Sept. 22. . . . ¶ The impressive retrospective of Alexander Rodchenko (1891-1956) is valuable as much for its insights into the rise and decline of the Russian Revolution as for its art-historical contribution. A leader of the avant-garde in the twenties, Rodchenko was a founder of Constructivism, an early—and very witty—practitioner of photocollage, and a brilliant graphic designer. Through Oct. 6. . . . ¶ "David Goldblatt: Photographs from South Africa." Through Oct. 6. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 10:30 to 6; Fridays, 10:30 to 8:30.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—"The Art of the Motorcycle," a dazzling collection of a hundred and eleven bikes, from the late nineteenth century to the present. The installation, designed by Frank Gehry, is itself a work of art: the architect has faced the ramps of the rotunda with stainless steel, giving a hallucinatory shimmer to Frank Lloyd Wright's masterpiece. The show might be summarized in one word: bitchin'. Through Sept. 20. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

Guggenheim Museum SoHo, 575 Broadway, at Prince St. (423-3500)—"The Hugo Boss Prize, 1998." Through Sept. 20. . . . ¶ Four video installations ("Bronx," "Roma," "Liquid Crystals," and "Baroque Cathodic Movements") by the Venetian artist Fabrizio Plessi, who makes use of a lot of rocks and hardware as armature for his insubstantial videos. Often he seems to be after a kind of fire-and-brimstone sublimity, but the effects are mostly silly. Yet another example of why so many people detest video art. Through Sept. 13. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Saturday evenings until 8.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—"Blind Side," Liisa Roberts's new video installation, projects a sped-up, fixed-camera shot of a bland living-room interior onto a semitransparent scrim, and these images are vividly reflected on a mirror at the end of the gallery. The changing light of sunrise, day, sunset, and night whizzes past in a few minutes, and the whole gallery takes on a Wonderland aura of ghostly impermanence. Through Oct. 4. . . . ¶ There's something endearingly romantic about Janine Antoni's new installation, "Swoon": the visitor passes through a corridor of wood scaffolding which reverberates with suggestive groans and sexy breathing into a tiny theatre where a crimson velvet curtain hides all but the pirouetting feet of ballet dancers performing a pas de deux from "Swan Lake." The only sound is the thud of slippers on the wooden boards—and then, for a spell, Tchaikovsky's score comes gorgeously to life. But as soon as one is drawn into the sweep of the music, it stops, and the thudding resumes. By draping the most physical of the performing arts in yards of velvet, Antoni has—paradoxically—made it more palpable. Through Nov. 15. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

Whitney Museum at Philip Morris, Park Ave. at 42nd St. (878-2550)—"Hope Sandrow: Water Life," a spare and restful installation in the midtown hubbub. Sandrow has neatly packed thousands of spiral seashells in cardboard boxes, which are themselves arranged on the gallery floors according to the idealized proportions set forth by the Greek sculptor Phidias. The walls are hung with large photographs of figures floating underwater, and a recording of running water plays continuously. Through Oct. 9. (Open Mondays through Fridays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 7:30.)



"Dancer (Adjusting Both Shoulder Straps)," circa 1896, from "Edgar Degas: Photographer," which opens at the Met on October 14.

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St. (769-5100)—The recently opened Hall of Biodiversity, a permanent exhibit, attempts to make vivid the dangers posed to life on Earth by the exploding human population and the consequent degradation of the global environment. The centerpiece is a diorama of the Central African rain forest, enclosed in a glass box of spectacular dimensions. The museum has raided the attic to create a handsomely displayed encyclopedia of flora and fauna called "Spectrum of Life," which covers the hall's western wall and extends to an overhead canopy. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Brooklyn Museum of Art, Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—"Kerry James Marshall: Mementos" includes the intricate and allusive paintings and sculptures (as well as a new site-specific installation) by an artist whose work is informed by events he witnessed in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1963 and Watts in 1965. Opens Sept. 11. . . . ¶ "Martin Lewis's World: Cityscapes on Paper" compares New York cityscapes by the printmaker (1881-1962) with photographs on the same subject by some of his contemporaries. Through Oct. 25. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays, 11 to 9; and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St. (517-2742)—"Inside Out: New Chinese Art" presents work from the past two decades by artists in China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan alongside work by their expatriate contemporaries. Opens Sept. 15. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Dia Center for the Arts, 548 W. 22nd St. (989-5566)—For "Excursus: Homage to the Square^3," the installation artist Robert Irwin has divided Dia's third floor into eighteen rooms with fine mesh-scrim walls, varying the effect in each of the translucent chambers with a spectrum of gels and fluorescent light. Opens Sept. 13. . . . ¶ "Joseph Beuys: Drawings After the Codices Madrid of Leonardo da Vinci, and Sculpture." Nearly a hundred drawings inspired by Leonardo's sketchbooks, as well as three sculptures, and performance regalia from "Aus Berlin." Opens Sept. 10. (Open Thursdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

Jewish Museum, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St. (423-3200)—"After Rabin: New Art from Israel," a collection of art created in the past three years by thirty-five resident artists, including Leah Nikel, Moshe Gershuni, and Gideon Gechtman. Opens Sept. 13. (Open Sundays through Thursdays, 11 to 5:45, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

Museum for African Art, 593 Broadway (966-1313)—"African Art/Western Eyes," an exhibition of objects created by the Baule people of the Ivory Coast. To highlight distinctions between the museum environment and the African villages where the objects were made, the sculptures, masks, and jewelry are displayed both in museum vitrines and in re-creations of the tribal villages, where viewing of the objects is restricted to religious ceremonies and intimate occasions. Opens Sept. 11. (Open

BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE

Tuesdays through Fridays, 10:30 to 5:30; Saturdays, noon to 8; Sundays, noon to 6.)

National Academy Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (534-1672)—"Faces of Time: 75 Years of Time Magazine Cover Portraits" provides more than seventy examples of the form. Many of the works offer remarkably apt matches of artist and subject. Alice Neel, for example, painted Kate Millet; Larry Rivers, Ted Kennedy; Alex Katz, John Updike; Andrew Wyeth, Dwight Eisenhower; and so on, through the march of history. Opens Sept. 9. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays and Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 5; Fridays, 10 to 6.)

National Museum of the American Indian, 1 Bowling Green (668-6624)—"The Art of Being Kuna: Layers of Meaning Among the Kuna of Panama" presents examples of the elaborately appliquéd blouses that illustrate traditional activities (fishing, village gatherings) or give quixotic interpretations to more recent interests (astronauts, lingerie, a Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle lounging in a hammock under a coconut tree). Opens Sept. 13. (Open daily, 10 to 5, and Thursday evenings until 8.)

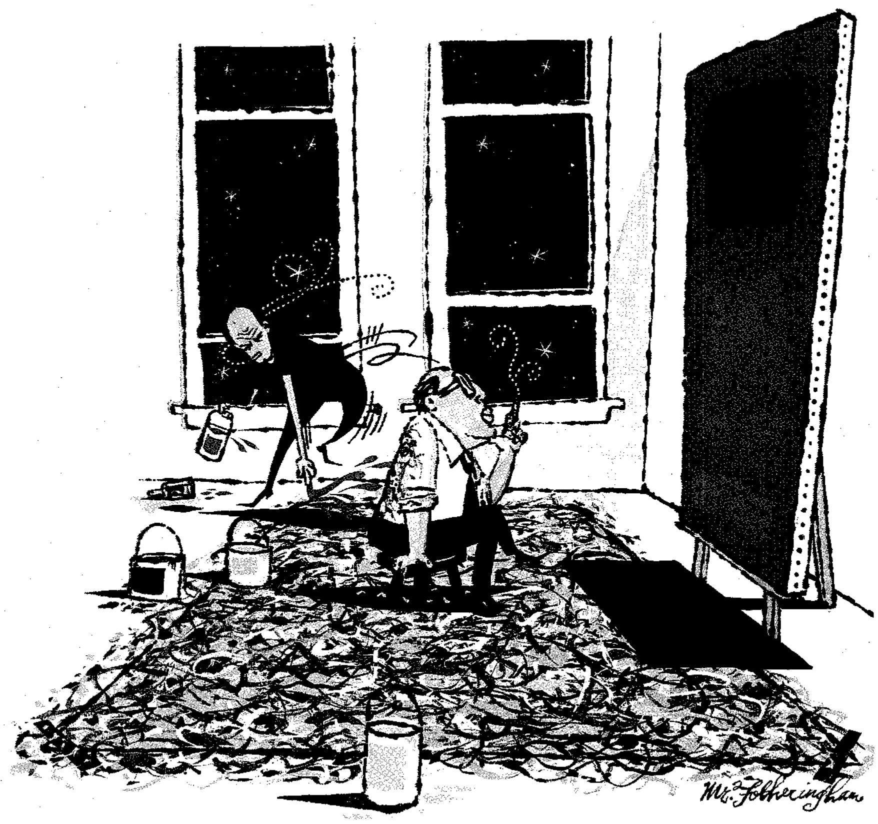
The New Museum, 583 Broadway (219-1222)—The urban folk paintings of Lower East Sider Martin Wong mix graffiti with Ashcan School realism. In this retrospective of mostly eighties work, garish Chinatown scenes and paeans to the poet Miguel Piñero keep company with life-size realistic storefronts, such as Wong's "Iglesia Pentecostal," an edge-to-edge composition whose scumbled white passages are, nevertheless, reminiscent of the abstractions of Robert Ryman. Through Sept. 13. (Open Wednesdays and Sundays, noon to 6; Thursdays through Saturdays, noon to 8.)

New-York Historical Society, 2 W. 77th St., at Central Park W. (873-3400)—"William Sidney Mount: Painter of American Life," an exhibition of paintings and works on paper. In 1826, Mount (1807-68) began taking drawing classes at the new National Academy of Design, in Manhattan, but in 1830 illness forced him to return to his home on Long Island. There he turned from religious subjects and portraiture to the scenes of country life for which he remains best known. Indeed, Mount is often credited with having invented American genre painting. His technique, with its thin glazes and transparent shadows, seems much indebted to the oil sketches of Rubens. He moved from a tight handling of paint to much freer but still precise renditions. Within his genre scenes, Mount embedded references to political and cultural unrest and racial nuance, even as the overriding tenor of his best pictures is poetic and introspective. Through Oct. 25. . . . ¶ "Fading Ad Campaign: Vintage Painted Signs" showcases the work of photographer Frank H. Jump, who has documented such New York City signage as the Reckitt's Blue laundry-soap advertisement from 1898, on a building on Washington Avenue, in Brooklyn. Through Nov. 1. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 11 to 5.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Pierre Bonnard (1867-1947)—Mostly rough, throwaway sketches—except for a series of studies for a children's book, a suite of music-hall caricatures, and an exquisite still-life of a vase of flowers, a single crimson bloom amid a symphony of whites which magically evokes a mood of sadness and tranquillity. Through Oct. 10. (Wildenstein, 19 E. 64th St. 879-0500.)



Jackson Pollock (in action) and Mark Rothko (in repose) once again inflame the New York art world, with retrospectives at MOMA and the Whitney, respectively.

Ward Davenny—Charcoal drawings and two oils, all of which are monumental musings on light and landscape. Through Sept. 19. (Ryan, 24 W. 57th St. 397-0669.)

John Dubrow—Cityscapes, including one of Prospect Park and a series of nearly aerial views of Manhattan, as seen from the window of the artist's studio in the World Trade Center. Through Sept. 26. (Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. 879-6606.)

"Figure Drawings"—This survey of portraits and nudes by American artists ranges from an austere Alice Neel (a monumental ink-and-gouache portrait of a woman) to a tiny Lichtenstein (a romance-comic-book image in colored pencil). Some of the works reveal artistic personalities that differ from the ones we are accustomed to: Wayne Thiebaud's carefully finished charcoal drawing of a seated woman might almost have come from the hand of John Singer Sargent; an enigmatic pastel by Jim Dine glows with the deep hues of Odilon Redon. Through Sept. 11. (Danese, 41 E. 57th St. 223-2227.)

"A Flower Is to the Summer Sweet"—Yes, the show is as cloying as its title, abounding with the sort of fussily painted still-lifes and sugary, turn-of-the-century vignettes that got tossed out when Cubism, Expressionism, and the other isms came to the rescue. Still, there are a few gems: Martin Johnson Heade's exquisite "Passion Flowers and Nesting Hummingbirds" is a vivid glimpse into the lush life of the Brazilian rain forest, and a watercolor of a tulip by the French nineteenth-century botanical illustrator Pierre Joseph Redouté opens a window onto a vanished era of faith in reason. Through Sept. 25. (Hirschl & Adler, 21 E. 70th St. 535-8810.)

Season Openers—alan bray, Schmidt Bingham, 41 E. 57th St. 888-1122. Opens Sept. 9. . . . **harris diamant,** Giampietro, 25 E. 73rd St. 861-8571. Opens Sept. 11. . . . **claudia fitch,** Baumgold, 128 E. 72nd St. 861-7338. Opens Sept. 10. . . . **sharon horvath** and **merbyn peake,** De Nagy, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 262-5050. Opens Sept. 10. . . . **david kroll,** Littlejohn, 41 E. 57th St. 980-2323. Opens Sept. 8. . . . **john laub,** Fischbach, 24 W. 57th St. 759-2345. Opens Sept. 10. . . . **jason martin,** Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. 980-5454. Opens Sept. 10. . . . **kenneth noland,** Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St. 752-0124. Opens Sept. 10. . . . **betye saar,** Rosenfeld, 24 W. 57th St. 247-0082. Opens Sept. 10.

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

Season Openers—lynda benglis, Cheim & Read, 521 W. 23rd St. 242-7727. Opens Sept. 12. . . . **miguel calderón,** Rosen, 525 W. 24th St. 627-6000. Opens Sept. 12. . . . **mat collishaw,** Bonakdar Jancou, 521 W. 21st St. 414-4144. Opens Sept. 12. . . . **carl d'alvia,** Fredericks, 504 W. 22nd St. 633-6555. Opens Sept. 12. . . . **erik a. frandsen,** DCA Gallery, 525 W. 22nd St. 255-5511. Opens Sept. 12. . . . **barbara gallucci,** Eller, 529 W. 20th St. 206-6411. Opens Sept. 10. . . . **jonathan hammer,** Marks 523 W. 24th St. 243-0200. Opens Sept. 12. . . . **fang lijun,** Protetch, 511 W. 22nd St. 633-6999. Opens Sept. 12. . . . **sarah lucas,** Gladstone, 515 W. 24th St. 206-9300. Opens Sept. 12. . . . **john morris,** D'Amelio Terras, 525 W. 22nd St. 352-9460. Opens Sept. 10. . . . **hironori murai,** Liebman Magnan, 552 W. 24th St. 255-3225. Opens Sept. 12. . . . **blake rayne,** Greene Naftali, 526 W. 26th St. 463-7770. Opens Sept. 11. . . . **damien smith,** Morris, 465 W. 23rd St. 727-2752. Opens Sept. 12. . . . **tunga,** Luhring Augustine, 531 W. 24th St. 206-9100. Opens Sept. 12. . . . **leslie wayne,** Shainman, 513 W. 20th St. 645-1701. Opens Sept. 10.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

Yayoi Kusama—An exhibition of early works on paper by this protean, delicately gifted Japanese artist strengthens her steadily rising reputation. Dating to the early fifties, before Kusama came to New York, these small-format drawings range impressively from austere fields of black ink dots to brilliantly colored gouaches that hover between abstraction and representation. Through Sept. 29. (Blum, 99 Wooster St. 343-0441.)

Masamichi Tohyama—The ancient Japanese art of ceramics, updated by an artist who paints acrylic enamel directly onto standard square bathroom tiles, which are then fired and assembled in modular abstractions. Some of the tiles are pure, brilliant color (glossy red, Max Factor beige); others are scribbled over in Twomblyesque nonstatements; still oth-

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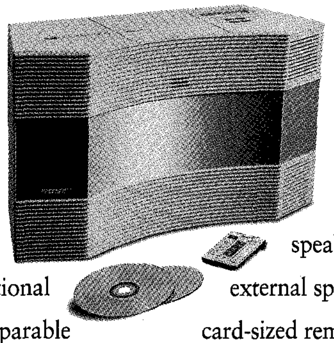

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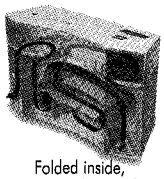

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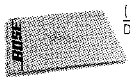

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ers are spray-painted to create mysterious mists. Through Sept. 10. (Wickiser, 568 Broadway. 941-1817.)

Lisa Mackie—"The Journal Paintings," a series of acrylics on paper and cheesecloth, document the artist's travels. Through Sept. 29. (June Kelly, 591 Broadway. 226-1660.)

Rachel Whiteread—The British sculptor, whose concrete cast of the interior of a London row house set off a career-making ruckus, now sets her sights on New York's urban architecture. But her version of a wooden water tower, cast from ghostly translucent resin, looks somewhat wan amid the real things. Still, it's a more welcome SoHo monument than Old Navy. ("Water Tower," which was commissioned by the Public Art Fund, can be seen by standing on the southwest corner of West Broadway and Grand St. and looking up. For more information, call 980-4575.)

Season Openers—**terry adkins** and **dotty attie,** P.P.O.W, 476 Broome St. 941-8642. Opens Sept. 10. . . . **jayashree chakravarty,** the Drawing Room, 40 Wooster St. 219-2166. Opens Sept. 12. . . . **fred franzen,** M-13, at 72 Greene St. 925-3007. Opens Sept. 10. . . . **joe fyfe,** Davies, 23 Commerce St. 243-6840. Opens Sept. 10. . . . **cadence giersbach,** Deitch Projects, 76 Grand St. 343-7300. Opens Sept. 10. . . . **wade hoefer,** Knowlton, 568 Broadway. 966-2625. Opens Sept. 10. . . . **alexander kaletski,** Dillon, 431 West Broadway. 966-2977. Opens Sept. 10. . . . **santi moix,** Kasmin, 74 Grand St. 219-3219. Opens Sept. 10. . . . **allan wexler,** Feldman, 31 Mercer St. 226-3232. Opens Sept. 12. . . . **lisa yuskavage,** Boesky, 51 Greene St. 941-9888. Opens Sept. 9.

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

Sotheby's—The fall spending season opens with a focus on Asian art. Sept. 14: Chinese paintings, including important pieces from the collection of C. C. Wang. . . . ¶ Sept. 15: Nearly four hundred Chinese snuff bottles. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 606-7000.)

Christie's—An auction of Chinese paintings and calligraphy. (Park Ave. at 59th St. 546-1000. Sept. 16.) . . . At **christie's east:** A sale of moderately priced rugs and carpets. (219 E. 67th St. 606-0400. Sept. 15.)

Phillips—The house's first auction of the season is devoted to collectible wines. The highlights are jeroboams of 1921 Cheval Blanc and Pétrus, neither of which, in that format, has appeared before at auction. (They're estimated to sell for about forty thousand dollars apiece.) (406 E. 79th St. 570-4830. Sept. 12.)

Doyle—Sept. 11: Estate jewelry. . . . ¶ Sept. 14: Asian art. (175 E. 87th St. 427-2730.)

Swann—An auction of nineteenth-century and children's books. (104 E. 25th St. 254-4710. Sept. 10.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

"Women Travellers"—Works by nine adventurers, including Leah Demchick, Marina Karella, Marcia Lippman, and Mai Duong. Through Sept. 26. (Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway. 966-6223.)

International Center of Photography—"Comparative Concepts: Photographs by August Sander, Karl Blossfeldt, Albert Renger-Patzsch, and Bernd and Hilla Becher." Through Sept. 13. (1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. 860-1777. Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Fridays, 10 to 8; and Saturdays and Sundays, 10 to 6.)

International Center of Photography Midtown—"Seeing Is Believing," a survey of the work of Vik Muniz. Opens Sept. 12. (Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. 860-1777. Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Fridays, 10 to 8; and Saturdays and Sundays, 10 to 6.)

Short List—**linda troeller,** Burden, 20 E. 23rd St. 505-5555. Through Sept. 12.

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art.)

MUSIC

Yo, Tchaikovsky!

New York City Opera and the Metropolitan Opera will square off this fall with adventures in production chic: City Opera adapts an already controversial English National Opera staging, by the boundary-breaking Martha Clarke, of Gluck's "Orfeo ed Euridice" (Oct. 6-23), while the Met unleashes the opulent directorial brain of Jonathan Miller on "Le Nozze di Figaro" (Oct. 29-Dec. 10). The superlative "Figaro" cast—Bryn Terfel, Renée Fleming, and Cecilia Bartoli—will cause mayhem at the box office. The contemporary-opera event of the season is Thomas Adès's "Powder Her Face," at BAM (Dec. 8-12). Adès, the brightest of the younger English composers, has written a witty, savage, haunting entertainment around the figure of the Duchess of Argyll, whose seedy divorce case scandalized Britain in the sixties.

Tchaikovsky, whose music used to be dismissed by intellectuals as melodramatic pop, is treated with unusual seriousness this fall. There will be a reprise of Bard College's summer Tchaikovsky Festival at Alice Tully Hall (Oct. 31), and a Tchaikovsky marathon by the Kirov Orchestra and Chorus follows at Carnegie Hall (Nov. 6-8). Valery Gergiev, the volcanic Kirov conductor, presents music from the last year of Tchaikovsky's life—the Sixth Symphony, the complete "Nutcracker," and the Third Piano Concerto (with Alexander Toradze)—and he will undoubtedly make the case for the composer as historic rather than hysteric. Anyone still embarrassed by these romantic effusions can return to Carnegie on Nov. 15 for the première of Milton Babbitt's presumably hyper-elegant Second Piano Concerto, with Robert Taub and the Met Orchestra under James Levine.

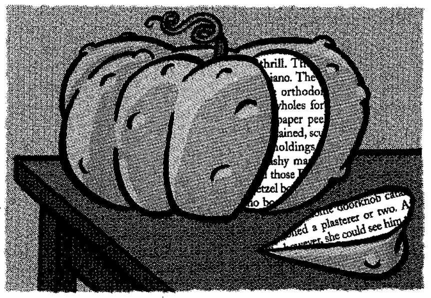
The world of early music has become a lot livelier: performers seem to be thinking more about entertainment than about edification. Andrew Manze, a ferocious period violinist, will appear at Weill Recital Hall on Nov. 18 with his group Romanesca. The hundredth birthday of George Gershwin will be celebrated by classical and jazz artists alike: the San Francisco Symphony plays a gala Gershwin program at Carnegie Hall (Sept. 23); Herbie Hancock releases a Gershwin tribute on the Verve label in October (with a vocal by Joni Mitchell); and the nonpareil chanteuse Mary Cleere Haran sings Gershwin at the Algonquin (Sept. 8-Oct. 10).

Fans of brighter than average rock are hailing the return of Maxwell's, in Hoboken, under the team that made it one of the area's best clubs in the eighties. Highlights are Yo la Tengo (Sept. 14-17) and Built to Spill (Oct. 28). —Alex Ross

BOOK CURRENTS

Autumn Leaves

As a prelude to all the millennial tomes that will be upon us before long comes a surge of books that have a distinctly centennial feel. **The Century** (Doubleday; Nov.), by Peter Jennings and Todd Brewster, and Harold Evans's more pointedly titled **The American Century** (Knopf; Oct.) both go for the panoramic approach with large formats and lavish photo spreads. Judy Crichton's **America 1900** (Holt; Nov.) concentrates instead on the tumult of just one year. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn tries something similar for Russia in **November, 1916** (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; Jan.), a massive historical novel depicting a Russia that is outwardly calm, yet sliding silently toward self-immolation.



The season's biographies also tend toward the retrospective—it's a good fall for American icons, from **Lindbergh,** by Scott Berg (Putnam; Sept.), to **Cole Porter,** by William McBrien (Knopf; Oct.), to **Dutch,** Edmund Morris's long-awaited biography of Ronald Reagan (Random House; Oct.). Morris tells the Great Communicator's story in the first person, perhaps because he now remembers more about Reagan than Reagan does.

There is new fiction from American stalwarts: Philip Roth revisits McCarthyism in **I Married a Communist** (Houghton Mifflin; Oct.); Tom Wolfe's latest bonfire, **A Man in Full** (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; Nov.), is made not from the vanities of New York but from the racial tensions of Atlanta; and **Bech at Bay** (Knopf; Oct.) heralds the return of John Updike's curmudgeonly littérateur, committing murders and winning the Nobel Prize.

This fall also sees a rich harvest of début novels: Scott Anderson's **Triage** (Scribner; Oct.), Susan Choi's **The Foreign Student** (HarperFlamingo; Sept.), and Shani Mootoo's **Cereus Blooms at Night** (Grove; Sept.). Among the second and third novels to watch for are **The Farming of Bones** (Soho; Sept.), by Edwidge Danticat; **The Sandglass,** by Romesh Gunesekera (New Press; Oct.); and **Reservation Road,** by John Burnham Schwartz (Knopf; Sept.)—all signs that there's certain to be plenty of good fiction in the new millennium.

CHRISTOPH NIEMANN

Books.

[AT BARNES & NOBLE]

What to Read Next

KAATERSKILL FALLS

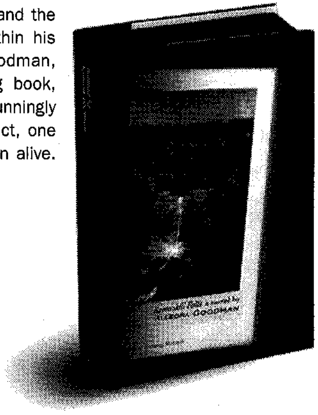
by Allegra Goodman

Journey into the Catskills with a group of Orthodox Jews who have made a small Yankee town their summer home. At the heart of this group is Rav Kirshner, a man wrestling with the future and the seeming loss of faith within his community. Allegra Goodman, author of the bestselling book, *The Family Markowitz*, stunningly depicts a society in conflict, one struggling to keep tradition alive. (Dial Press)

Publisher's Price: $23.95

Discount **30%**

B&N Price: $16.76



THE MUSEUM GUARD

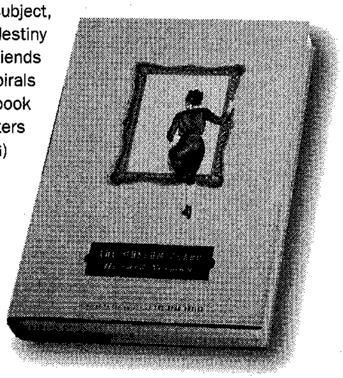
by Howard Norman

The author of *The Bird Artist* returns with a spellbinding book in which history, art, and romance collide. A Jewish girl's obsession with a Dutch painting has her believing that she is its subject, and that she must fulfill a destiny that's not her own. As her friends attempt to intervene, she spirals toward destruction in a book filled with eccentric characters and haunted moments. (FSG)

Publisher's Price: $24.00

Discount **30%**

B&N Price: $16.80



RESERVATION ROAD

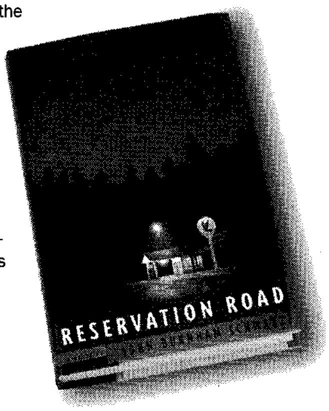
by John Burnham Schwartz

Reservation Road is a powerful story of lives that converge in catastrophe. When his ten-year-old son is killed in a hit-and-run, Ethan Learner's life becomes consumed with finding the driver. But he isn't the only one haunted by the tragedy: his wife and daughter are overwhelmed by the feeling that it was somehow their fault, and the driver of the car sees his life collapse under the burden of his guilt. John Burnham Schwartz explores the nature of revenge in a gripping book with a climax that is both horrible and apt. (Knopf)

Publisher's Price: $24.00

Discount **30%**

B&N Price: $16.80



DISCOVER
GREAT·NEW·WRITERS

THE FARMING OF BONES

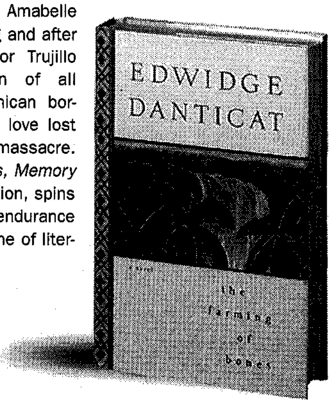
by Edwidge Danticat

National Book Award-winning author Edwidge Danticat's *The Farming of Bones* is the heartbreaking tale of two lovers separated by tragedy. Narrator Amabelle Desir recounts her life during and after the years when the dictator Trujillo ordered the extermination of all Haitians living within Dominican borders, and wistfully recalls a love lost forever amid the ruins of the massacre. Danticat, whose *Breath, Eyes, Memory* is an Oprah Book Club selection, spins a tale of tragedy, grief, and endurance that confirms her place as one of literature's rising stars. (SOHO)

Publisher's Price: $23.00

Discount **30%**

B&N Price: $16.10



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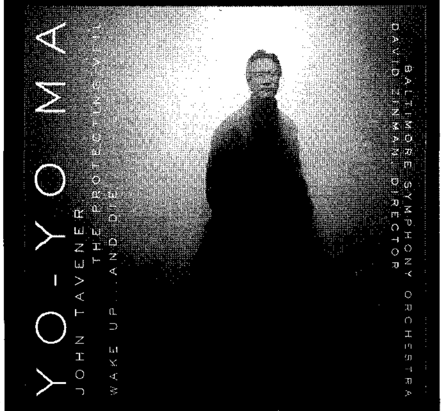

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CLASSICAL MUSIC

OPERA

New York City Opera—Opening performances of the company's season. Sept. 10 at 6:30, Sept. 13 at 1:30, and Sept. 15 at 7:30: "Tosca." . . . ¶ Sept. 11 at 8: Handel's "Partenope." . . . ¶ Sept. 12 at 1:30 and 8: A double bill of Weill's "The Seven Deadly Sins" and Orff's "Carmina Burana." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

American Opera Projects—Presenting the première of "Intimate Structures," an hour-long musical-theatre piece by Paul Nash, inspired by Roland Barthes's "A Lover's Discourse." (463 Broome St. Sept. 10-11 at 7. For information about tickets, call 431-8102.)

Amato Opera—The company's fifty-first season opens with "La Bohème." (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 228-8200. Sept. 12 at 7 and Sept. 13 at 2:30.)

"Der Kaiser von Atlantis"—The centennial industry has pretty much dropped the ball when it comes to Victor Ullmann (born on January 1, 1898, in Těšin, on what would become the Polish-Czech border), but the Miller Theatre is doing its part by opening its season with a staging of his hour-long opera, "Der Kaiser von Atlantis" ("The Emperor of Atlantis"). His listener-friendly Expressionist style combined the influence of his teachers Schoenberg and Zemlinsky with his interest in American jazz. These traits, plus the fact that he was Jewish, sealed his fate with the Nazis, and in September of 1942 Ullmann was deported to the arts-oriented Terezin concentration camp, where he composed "Der Kaiser von Atlantis" with librettist Petr Kien (who wrote the text on the reverse sides of prison forms). An ironic tale about a monarch whose senseless warmongering makes life so intolerable that Death takes a holiday in protest, the piece was written to be performed by the camp's inmates (though the production was squashed at the dress-rehearsal stage). Through some miracle, the score was preserved after the composer was sent to his death at Auschwitz, in 1944. Petr Kotick leads the S.E.M. Ensemble and a cast of emerging American singers. (Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Sept. 15 at 8. Through Sept. 19.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

Manhattan Chamber Sinfonia—Glen Barton Cortese conducts Rossini's "La Gazza Ladra" Overture, the première of Giampaolo Bracali's Viola Concerto (with Daniel Avshalomov), and Beethoven's Symphony No. 3. (Borden Auditorium, Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. Sept. 12 at 8. No tickets necessary. . . . ¶ Armor Hall, Wave Hill, 249th St. at Independence Ave., the Bronx. 718-549-3200, ext. 229. Sept. 13 at 2.)

American Symphony Orchestra—Leon Botstein conducts, and leads a discussion about, Beethoven's Third Symphony. (Great Hall, Cooper Union, Third Ave. at 7th St. 353-4195. Sept. 13 at 5.)

Jupiter Symphony—The ensemble's season opens with a program in which Jens Nygaard conducts a suite from Rameau's "Dardanus," Delius's "A Song Before Sunrise," and both of Chopin's piano concertos (featuring Sara Davis Buechner, in a début of sorts, since she has appeared hitherto under the persona of the dependably excellent David Buechner). (Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church, 152 W. 66th St. Sept. 14 at 2 and 7 and Sept. 15 at 8. For information about tickets, call 799-1259.)

Kiev Symphony Orchestra and Chorus—Roger G. McMurrin leads a wide-ranging concert that includes excerpts from Tchaikovsky's "Swan Lake," Rachmaninoff's Vespers, and Brahms's "A German Requiem," as well as Ukrainian folk selections. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Sept. 15 at 8.)

RECITALS

Kent Tritle—The organist performs works by Bach, Mendelssohn (his Sonata No. 2), Reger (Introduction and Passacaglia in D Minor), and George Crumb ("Pastoral Drone"), among others. (Church of St. Ignatius Loyola, Park Ave. at 84th St. 288-2520. Sept. 9 at 7:30.)

The Queen's Chamber Band—The modern-instrument Baroque ensemble, headed by harpsichordist Elaine Comparone, offers vocal and instrumental works by Dowland, Monteverdi, Johann Christian Bach, Handel, and Domenico Scarlatti, in addition to works by several lesser lights. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 501-3330. Sept. 9 at 8.)

Bargemusic—Pianist Anton Nel performs Chopin's Mazurka in C-Sharp Minor and his Barcarolle, violinist Ida Levin and cellist Ronald Thomas join him for Beethoven's G-Major Piano Trio (Op. 1, No. 2), and violist Robert Rinehart completes the ensemble for Fauré's G-Minor Piano Quartet. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-4061. Sept. 10 at 7:30 and Sept. 13 at 4.)

Joan Tower Celebration—Joan Tower ranks as one of the most successful woman composers of all time. She has been honored with prestigious awards, ensembles practically beg her to accept commissions, and her works actually enter the repertoire: her "Fanfare for the Uncommon Woman," for example, has been played by more than two hundred different ensembles since its première a decade ago, and even her more massive orchestral works (which include five full-scale concertos) get frequent workouts. Tower is especially dear to performers, who view her as one of their own, since she served for a decade and a half, until 1984, as the founding pianist of the Da Capo Chamber Players. Many of her distinguished musician-colleagues (all instrumentalists, appropriately, since she writes exclusively in nonvocal genres) gather to celebrate her sixtieth birthday (four days late) with a concert that includes her "Petroushskates," "Très Lent," "And . . . They're Off," "Turning Points," "Night Fields," and "Wild Purple" (a première, for unaccompanied viola). In addition, four of the musicians—violinist Elmar Oliveira, flutist Carol Wincenc, cellist André Emelianoff, and pianist Ursula Oppens—have composed musical tributes that will receive their first readings. Strange to say, none has ever composed a piece before. Will any of them find themselves embarked on the same path that led Ms. Tower from the piano bench to the composer's desk? Among the other performers are the Da Capo Chamber Players, members of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, and the Muir String Quartet. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 501-3330. Sept. 10 at 8.)

Grappling with Schoenberg—"I am a conservative who was forced to become a radical," Arnold Schoenberg once said, but for most of our century—a century in which an inspired strand of serious composition evolved in his wake—audiences have tended to regard his œuvre warily, oblivious of its connection to musical tradition. Cellist Fred Sherry has organized a weekend in which eminent chamber musicians and singers perform some of his groundbreaking works, and in which scholars and composers ponder the Schoenberg situation. Sept. 12 at 8:30: Following a performance of Schoenberg's Chamber Symphony (Op. 9), conducted by Robert Craft, Messrs. Craft and Sherry are joined by Milton Babbitt, Osvaldo Golijov, James Levine, and Charles Wuorinen to

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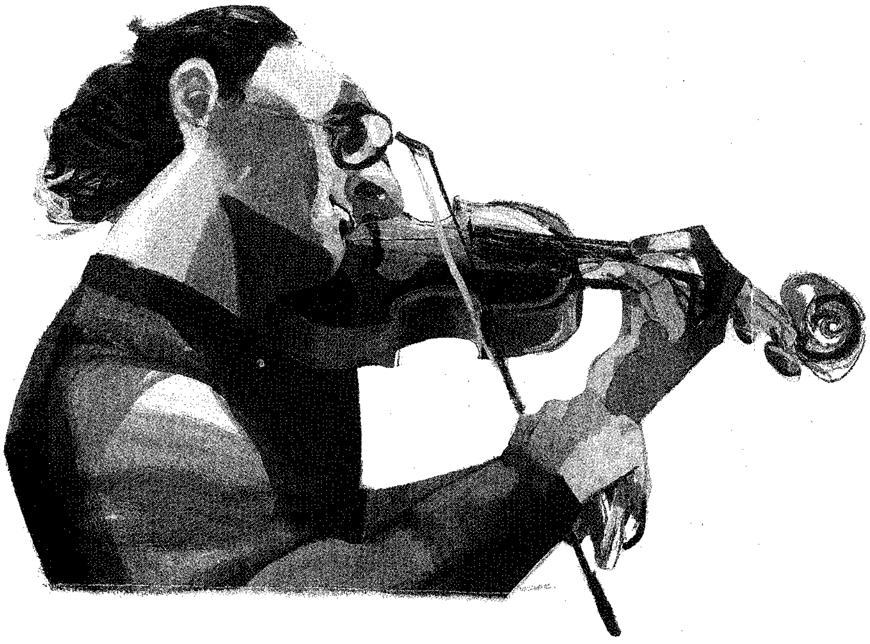
consider the composer's inventiveness. . . . ¶ Sept. 13 at 2:30: Performances of the String Trio (Op. 45), Three Solo Piano Pieces (Op. 11, famous for signalling the breakthrough into atonal composition), "The Book of the Hanging Gardens," "Friede auf Erden," and "De Profundis," followed by reminiscences of the composer from Pia Gilbert, Leon Kirchner, Lawrence Schoenberg (his son), Gunther Schuller, and Leonard Stein. . . . ¶ Sept. 13 at 7:30: Actor David Margulies reads from the composer's writings to introduce a concert (at 8) that comprises the Fantasy for Violin and Piano (Op. 47), Variations for Orchestra (Op. 31, in Mr. Wuorinen's transcription for two pianos), and String Quartet No. 2. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 501-3330.)


RICCARDO VECCHIO

Violinist Andrew Manze appears at Weill Recital Hall on November 18.

"Sundays on the Island"—Mordechai Rechtman conducts an assemblage of wind players in Mozart's C-Minor Serenade (K. 388) and Gounod's "Petite Symphonie." (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. 718-885-2478. Sept. 13 at noon.)

John Tucker and Alard von Rohr—The baritone and the pianist, both classically trained in London but now based in Berlin, offer a musical biography of Gershwin, including performances of such evergreen works as "Swanee," "The Man I Love," and "Rhapsody in Blue." (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Sept. 13 at 2.)

Justin Bischof and Stephen Tharp—Two of the city's notable organists—the former affiliated with the Church of the Resurrection, the latter with St. Bartholomew's—bring their four hands and four feet to bear on arrangements of such symphonic standards as Ravel's "Boléro," Mussorgsky's "The Great Gate of Kiev," and Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. (St. Patrick's Cathedral, Fifth Ave. at 51st St. Sept. 13 at 4:45. No tickets necessary.)

Ori Kam—The violist is assisted by pianist Ilan Rechtman in Hindemith's Sonata No. 4 and Brahms's Sonata No. 1. (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. Sept. 13 at 6 and 8. No tickets necessary.)

New York's Ensemble for Early Music—Nine of the group's members team up with percussionist Glen Velez for a program of medieval istanpittas. A concert by Ron Westray's jazz quintet follows. (Fort Tryon Park, just outside the Cloisters. Sept. 13 at 6:30. No tickets necessary.)

Meng-chieh Liu—Pianist, performing works by Mozart, Chopin, and Liszt. (Mansfield Hotel, 12 W. 44th St. Sept. 14 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

OUT OF TOWN

Music Mountain—Final concerts of the season. Sept. 12 at 8: A concert of ragtime and classic jazz, performed by Green's New Novelty Orchestra. . . . ¶ Sept. 13 at 3: Flutist John Solum, with four period-instrument-playing colleagues, offers flute quartets by two Haydns (Franz Joseph and his brother, Michael), Mozart, and Boccherini, in addition to Jack Beeson's "Fantasy, Ditty, and Fughettas" and Ezra Laderman's "Epigrams and Canons" for two Baroque flutes. (Falls Village, Conn. 860-824-7126.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Fresh Stages—The Gowanus Arts Exchange, a nonprofit organization in Brooklyn which has been nurturing young dancers and artists for the past seven years, has a new home. In celebration, it is presenting a weekend of music, dance, and free classes. Highlights include performances by Ben Munisteri, Yasuko Yokoshi, Reggie Wilson, and other stars of the dance world, as well as a talk by actor Steve Buscemi, about the Exchange's new film programs. (421 Fifth Ave., at 8th St., Brooklyn. Sept. 11-13. For more information, call 718-832-0018.)

Readings—Sept. 9 at 7:30: By Christopher Dickey, from "Summer of Deliverance," an account of his relationship with his father, James. (Barnes & Noble, Sixth Ave. at 21st St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Sept. 13 at 3: By poets Richard Foerster, Molly Peacock, and David Lehman. (Civic Center Synagogue, 49 White St., between Church St. and Broadway. Tickets at the door.) . . . ¶ Sept. 14 at 7: By Irish playwright Sebastian Barry ("The Steward of Christendom"), from his novel, "The Whereabouts of Eneas McNulty." (Glucksman Ireland House, New York University, 1 Washington Mews. Tickets at the door.)

Talks—Sept. 13 at 8: Grace Slick, the voice of Jefferson Airplane, discusses her new book, "Somebody to Love? A Rock and Roll Memoir." (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.) . . . ¶ Sept. 14 at 6: Simon Litten, of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, talks about the hunt for toxic chemicals in New York Harbor. (New York Academy of Sciences, 2 E. 63rd St. No tickets necessary.)

Walk—Sept. 13 at 11, 1, and 3: The Lower East Side Conservancy offers guided tours of the neighborhood's historic synagogues. For reservations, which are required, call 233-6037, ext. 301.

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Nancy Churnin, ★★★1/2
Dallas Morning News

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Nancy B. Stewart, customer,
Belmar, NJ

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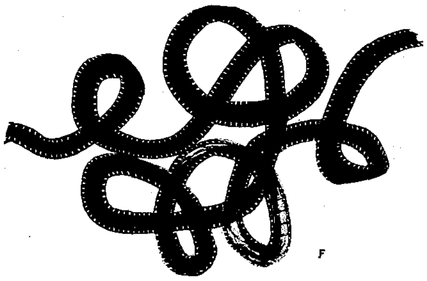


Coming Attractions

IT'S always risky to comb through schedules in search of themes, but, after a summer of planet-in-peril movies, the end of 1998 should, if all goes according to plan, be a growth area for death and Nazis. This fall sees Edward Norton as a skinhead and Edward Furlong as his Fascist kid brother in "American History X," and Bryan Singer, who has kept us waiting since "The Usual Suspects," delivers "Apt Pupil," starring Ian McKellen as a former concentration-camp guard. That sounds more alluring than the gruesomely titled "Stepmom," in which Julia Roberts, queen of the sickness flick, lends succor to the cancer-stricken Susan Sarandon. Same deal, different leads: Renée Zellweger looks after Meryl Streep in "One True Thing," based on the Anna Quindlen book. Jonathan Demme's adaptation of the Toni Morrison novel "Beloved" features Oprah Winfrey being menaced by the ghost of her daughter, played by Thandie Newton (Go for it, Thandie!). Meanwhile, a deceased Robin Williams, aided by Cuba Gooding, Jr., tours the afterlife in "What Dreams May Come." If that sounds rum, consider "Meet Joe Black," in which Brad Pitt plays Death. Look out for mass suicides among teen-age females.

No fall would be complete without its rash of sequels and remakes. Adrian Lyne's "Lolita" finally arrives this month, although the boldest offering has to be a new "Psycho," which even younger moviegoers may recognize as having something to do with Alfred Hitchcock. The director this time is Gus Van Sant, whose fidelity to the original—he is even re-creating the old shooting schedule—makes you wonder why someone didn't simply strike a new print of the Anthony Perkins version. Donning the Perkins wig is Vince Vaughn, with Anne Heche under the power shower. Rest assured that "The Wizard of Oz," out on Christmas Day, is a reissue of the real thing.

The other festive treat is "The Thin Red Line," based on the James Jones war novel. A film about Guadalcanal is not the most obvious Christmas fare, but this one is directed by Terrence Malick, who has been off the map since "Days of Heaven," and the anticipation is such that a shining star is expected to stop over the cinema where the movie opens. The only things more intriguing than the Malick project are the plot of "Pleasantville," which zaps a couple of kids into a black-and-white fifties sitcom starring Joan Allen and William H. Macy; the title of the new John Waters picture, "Pecker" (how does he keep it up?); and "Shakespeare in Love," which is jointly scripted by Tom Stoppard and one of the guys who wrote "Cutthroat Island." I can't wait. —ANTHONY LANE

OPENING

CHILE, OBSTINATE MEMORY—Reviewed below in Film Notes. Playing with Patricio Guzmán's "The Battle of Chile Part 2: The Coup d'État" (1976; in English and Spanish). Opening Sept. 9. (Film Forum.)

CUBE—Writer-director Vincenzo Natali's psychological sci-fi thriller, about six strangers who find themselves trapped in a maze and must learn to work together in order to escape. Opening Sept. 11.

DAVID SEARCHING—A story of two roommates, David and Gwen (Anthony Rapp and Camryn Manheim), looking for love, but not necessarily with each other. Written and directed by Leslie L. Smith. Opening Sept. 11. (Quad Cinema.)

FREE TIBET—Sarah Pirozek's documentary of the San Francisco Tibetan Freedom Concert in June, 1996. Opening Sept. 11. (Village East Cinemas.)

LET'S TALK ABOUT SEX—Director Troy Beyer went to South Beach, Florida, to make this part-documentary, part-scripted (by Ms. Beyer) film about what women divulge to one another about their love lives. Opening Sept. 11. (Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, State, and Village Theatre VII.)

ROUNDERS—John Dahl's drama about a law student (Matt Damon) who must decide whether to continue with law school or return to the world of high-stakes poker. With Edward Norton, Gretchen Mol, John Malkovich, and John Turturro. Opening Sept. 11.

SIMON BIRCH—A tale of the friendship of two young boys, suggested by the novel "A Prayer for Owen Meany," by John Irving. Written and directed by Mark Steven Johnson; with Ian Michael Smith and Joseph Mazzello. Opening Sept. 11. (Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema I, Guild, Lincoln Square, and Village East Cinemas.)

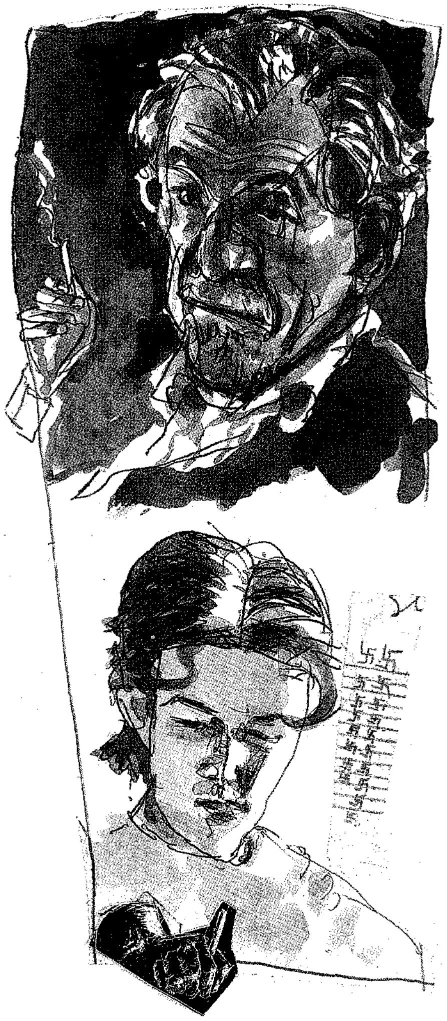
WITHOUT LIMITS—Director Robert Towne co-wrote (with Kenny Moore) this story about the American track champion Steve Prefontaine (Billy Crudup), who was killed in a car accident in 1975 at the age of twenty-four. Opening Sept. 11.

FILM NOTES

(If a movie has been reviewed recently in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given.)

BLADE—Ugly. Vampires prepare for war against humans, throw parties at a decadent night club, and snarl a lot. Wesley Snipes plays a half-man, half-vampire good guy who hurls various things at the vampires, which causes them to explode. Adapted from the Marvel Comics series, this movie lacks the mournfulness that sustains a good horror strip; it's trashy, but too deafening and invasive to have the appeal of good pulp.—*Sarah Kerr* (Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Sutton, and Village Theatre VII.)

CHILE, OBSTINATE MEMORY (1997)—Pure in focus and vigorous in attack, this fifty-eight-minute documentary achieves poetic intensity with a spare, unmannered style. Returning to his homeland with his long-banned epic, "The Battle of Chile" (1976), under his arm, the filmmaker Patricio Guzmán sets out to explore the importance—and the fragility—of memory in politics in this provocative hour-long documentary. He unearths painful recollections of Salvador Allende's Unidad Popular government and the bloody coup that toppled it, and ends up asking: What happens to a dream deferred? This film combines heartbreaking reminiscences and provocative confrontations with eerie visits to the scenes of political crimes, like the stadium in Santiago that became a post-coup torture center and prison camp. In the most extraordinary sequence, Guzmán films men and women in the street reacting to the playing of the Unidad Popular anthem: we seem to witness nothing less than the rebirth of collective memory. In Spanish.—*Michael Sragow* (Film Forum; starting Sept. 9.)



Ian McKellen and Brad Renfro in Bryan Singer's "Apt Pupil."

WARREN LINN

Coming Apart (1969)—A psychiatrist (Rip Torn) who has taken the name Glassman cracks up, and you get to see it all reflected in a mirror. This movie is fun, at first, when the idea just seems a put-on and an excuse for some amusing sexual encounters. But then the writer-director, Milton Moses Ginsberg, begins to take the theme seriously, and it all becomes a lot of whimpering and screaming and shattered glass. With Sally Kirkland and Viveca Lindfors.—*Pauline Kael* (Museum of Modern Art; Sept. 14.)

Crossroads (1937)—This smart Depression-era movie has a genuine smiling-through ebullience. What's amazing is that it wasn't made in Hollywood, but in a Shanghai that was being threatened by Japan. Although censors cut explicit references to the Axis menace, the movie's college men and feisty working women are full of the spirit of resistance. Zhao Dan plays a sometime proofreader and reporter, and Bai Yang is his new gal, an out-of-towner who briefly works at a textile mill. Since he keeps nighttime hours and she punches in nine-to-five, for most of the film they don't realize that they live on opposite sides of a flimsy apartment wall. Few performers could navigate this film's frequent shifts between romantic farce and social drama; Zhao Dan and Bai Yang thrive on it. They bring a sportive chagrin to their anonymous apartment bickering and a slapstick elegance to their courtship. Despite the familiarity of the setup, Bai Yang plays a type not often seen in American movies: a sort of ingénue, who's had an affair with a married man and retained her innocence. (She isn't quick to give up her independence even after she meets her true love.) She roots everything in a warm and sensual yet wised-up personality. When she acts out a "Camille"-inspired daydream, what's striking is how similar her swoony alter ego is to her down-to-earth character. Written and directed by Shen Xiling. In Mandarin.—*M.S.* (Walter Reade Theatre; Sept. 12-13.)

Dance with Me—Randa Haines's romance about two competitors (Vanessa L. Williams and Chayanne) in the World Open Dance Championship in Las Vegas. Also with Kris Kristofferson. (Criterion Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)

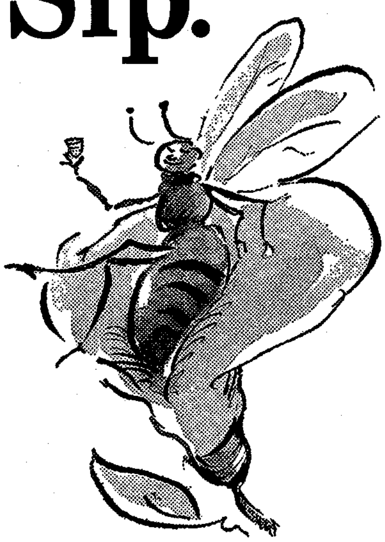
Ever After—A sumptuous retelling of the Cinderella tale, with Drew Barrymore as the feisty stepdaughter and Anjelica Huston as the conniving stepmother who wants to marry her own daughter off to the handsome prince (Dougray Scott). Barrymore is sweet and amusing, but Huston gives the memorable performance—she swoops down on every actor's line like a hawk, leaving only gristle.—*Bruce Diones* (Beekman, Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, 19th Street East 6, and Waverly.)

54—Mike Myers plays Steve Rubell as the druggy epicenter of Studio 54, and his performance gives director Mark Christopher's soapy morality tale its only moments of wanton, hedonistic spirit. Christopher, who also wrote the script, concocts a story that's basically a watered-down "Saturday Night Fever" setup; in this film an aimless, blue-collar Jersey kid (Ryan Phillippe) with dreams of the big city gets a job at Studio 54, takes drugs, meets famous people, falls in love, and learns to stand on his own. The movie treats the party crowd he meets along the way as a bunch of vain, pathetic characters rich snobs who pick on the weak and use sex as currency (pleasure corrupts everything). There's a lot to be said about where the road to excess leads, but it's not being said here.—*B.D.* (Astor Plaza, Gotham Cinema, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Showplace, and Village Theatre VII.)

Firelight—A nineteenth-century love story from writer-director William Nicholson, about a Swiss governess (Sophie Marceau) who manages to become the caretaker of her own illegitimate daughter (Dominique Belacourt). Also with Stephen Dillane and Kevin Anderson. (Angelika Film Center.)

Halloween: H20—Most of the sequels to "Halloween," John Carpenter's original shocker, were tripe, but this one, directed by Steve Miner, has a freshness—even a kind of wit—mixed in with all the blood. It also has Jamie Lee Curtis, who was always the mainstay of the "Halloween" saga at its best. The movie is not the exercise in undiluted fright that Carpenter gave us; nor, perhaps, should we expect it to be. Viewers of this stuff are less innocent than ever before, and Miner trades efficiently on their knowing glee.—*Anthony Lane* (Reviewed in A Critic at Large, 8/10/98.) (Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema 3rd Avenue, 84th Street Sixplex, State, and Village East Cinemas.)

Sip.



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How Stella Got Her Groove Back—Terry McMillan's story about a beautiful buppie named Stella (Angela Bassett, looking so buff that she could pose for a muscle magazine), who falls in love, in Jamaica, with a man half her age (Taye Diggs, quite effective as a smoldering Teddy bear). This is Harlequin Romance land, and the film squeaks by as long as it's content to watch its lovers throwing off sparks. But the second half, in which Bassett struggles to fit love into her workaholic life, goes on forever. While Bassett is lovely here, she's also a little steely and impersonal. Whoopi Goldberg helps out immensely as Stella's obnoxious best friend—it's her same wacky shtick, but looser and more clever than usual.—*S.K.* (84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Metro Cinema, Orpheum VII, State, and Village Theatre VII.)

I Married a Strange Person!—Bill Plympton's special brand of dementia—faces imploding, elongated tongues wrapping around heads, cigarettes being smoked from every orifice—has been a staple of animation festivals for the past ten years. Here he stretches out to feature length, and the results are mixed. The plot kicks off with a freak accident involving orgasmic birds, a satellite dish, and a guy named Grant, who suddenly gains the power to make his every weird thought take shape; in other words, he turns into an animator. A battle with a power-mad television mogul ensues, and it's not very interesting. But along the way, the Plympton trademarks—fine drawing, unexpected perspectives, inspired perversions bursting through a civilized veneer—are on gross, glorious view. There's a great sequence in which Grant and his wife are having sex, and their house and everything in it—the flower and the vase, the comb and the brush, the wing tip and the pump—get it on in sybaritic sympathy.—*Ken Marks* (Angelika Film Center.)

Ivan the Terrible, Parts I and II (1944-46)—Eisenstein's two-part extravaganza on the evils of tyranny is obviously a magnificent work and it imposes its style on the viewer, yet it's so lacking in human dimensions that you may stare at it in a kind of outrage. True, every frame in it looks great—it's a brilliant collection of stills—but as a movie, it's static, grandiose, and frequently ludicrous, with elaborately angled, overcomposed photography, and overwrought, eyeball-rolling performers slipping in and out of the walls, dragging their shadows behind them. The city of Alma Ata was rebuilt full scale in Central Asia with lumber imported from Siberia, and millions of rubles' worth of sets, beards, and brocades went into it—it's a heavy dose of décor. In Part I, released in 1945, Ivan is crowned, and then, because of the opposition of the boyars (or nobles) who, among their evil deeds, poison his wife, he is forced to abdicate. In Part II Ivan has been restored to power with the help of "the people," but, under the leadership of Ivan's ratty old aunt Efrosinia, who hopes to put her (crazy? homosexual? both?) son on the throne, the boyars plot to assassinate the Tsar. He outwits them and destroys their power in a big, bloody purge. Music by Prokofiev. In Russian.—*P.K.* (Museum of Modern Art; Part I; Sept. 15, Part II, Sept. 22.)

The Maltese Falcon (1941)—Humphrey Bogart's most exciting role was Sam Spade, that ambiguous mixture of avarice and honor, sexuality and fear, who gave new dimension to the detective genre. This film, the first directed by John Huston, is an almost perfect visual equivalent of the Dashiell Hammett thriller. Huston used Hammett's plot design and economic dialogue in a hard, precise directorial style that brings out the full viciousness of characters so ruthless and greedy that they become comic. It is (and this is rare in American films) a work of entertainment that is yet so skillfully constructed that after many years and many viewings it has the same brittle explosiveness—and even some of the same surprise—that it had in its first run. Bogart is backed by an impeccably "right" cast: Mary Astor as Brigid O'Shaughnessy, Sydney Greenstreet as Casper Gutman, Peter Lorre as Joel Cairo, Gladys George as Iva, Elisha Cook, Jr., as Wilmer the gunsel, Jerome Cowan as Miles Archer, Lee Patrick as Effie, Ward Bond and Barton MacLane as the cops, and the director's father, Walter Huston (uncredited), as Captain Jacoby. The young Huston was a good enough screenwriter to see that Hammett had already written the scenario, and he didn't soften Sam Spade's character. Bogart played him as written by Hammett, and Hammett was not sentimental about detectives: they were cops who were going it alone, i.e., who had smartened up and become more openly mercenary and crooked. By shooting the material from Spade's point of view, though, Huston makes it possible for the audience to enjoy Spade's petty, sadistic victories and his sense of triumph as he proves he's tougher than anybody. Spade was left a romantic figure, though he's only a few steps away from the psychopathic "Nobody ever put anything over on Fred C. Dobbs" of "The Treasure of the Sierre Madre" (1948), which was a box-office failure—perhaps because the audience was forced to see what was inside the hero.—*P.K.* (American Museum of the Moving Image; Sept. 12.)

Mark Twain's America—Stephen Low's diminutive 3-D documentary about our greatest humorist should be given credit for at least achieving an element of surprise. What other recent movie director has had the courage to hurl an author at his audience instead of an asteroid? The movie, which clocks in at just under an hour and uses

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nineteenth-century photography as well as scenes with contemporary Twain groupies, is given a Southern-fried narration by an actor who apparently thinks that the bewhiskered man in the white suit is Colonel Sanders. A close encounter with a champion jumping frog that can bound twenty feet almost makes the nose-ache from the Imax goggles worth it.—*Jay Fielden* (Lincoln Square.)

A Merry War—Robert Bierman's version of George Orwell's 1936 satirical novel about love, "Keep the Aspidistra Flying." With Richard E. Grant and Helena Bonham Carter. (First & 62nd Cinemas and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Modulations—Iara Lee's compelling documentary chronicles how sound technology has eclipsed traditional modes of performance in much recent pop music. Without passing aesthetic judgments, Lee focusses on how the manipulation of sound has allowed d.j.s and sound mixers to fill the spot once reserved for composers, sometimes with impressive creativity. "Electronic music is the hot-rodding of the nineties," declares synthesizer pioneer Robert Moog, and the film's hyperactive editing, by Paula Heredia, underscores the visceral thrill his comment implies. To anyone who's been engrossed in the pop scene for the past three decades, this should prove a nostalgic, and often enlightening, hip-hop down memory lane. But music lovers not drawn to youth culture should check it out, too: in a mere seventy-five minutes they'll get a beautifully crafted précis of sonic experimentation and will sustain no hearing loss in the process.—*James M. Keller* (Quad Cinema.)

The Negotiator—The summer's first action film that's as rich in character as it is in suspense. The hypertense plot—a hostage negotiator (Samuel L. Jackson) takes some hostages of his own while another police strategist (Kevin Spacey) tries to persuade him to give up—allows ample room for two well-modulated performances. The movie is packed with a terrific supporting cast—particularly the late J. T. Walsh.—*B.D.* (Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 64th and 2nd, 34th Street Showplace, and Village East Cinemas.)

Next Stop Wonderland—This smart-talking comedy, set in Boston, concerns Erin (Hope Davis) and Alan (Alan Gelfant), two independent souls who are out of synch in their respective occupations: she's a nurse who should be a doctor; he's a plumber who should be a marine biologist. They're obviously made for each other, but writer-director-editor Brad Anderson playfully refuses to allow them to meet cute. Unlike the heavy-handed "Good Will Hunting," this gifted-Boston-misfit romance floats, adroitly mixing thoughtfulness, farce, and surprise.—*K.M.* (Angelika Film Center, Cinema II, and Lincoln Square.)

The Parent Trap—You might think that Martha Stewart was behind this remake of the classic Hayley Mills trifle about identical twins (here played by Lindsay Lohan) trying to reunite their divorced parents. This time around, the twins' father (Dennis Quaid) is a rich vintner in the Napa Valley, and Mom (Natasha Richardson) is a famous London wedding-gown designer. Director Nancy Meyers seems to be aiming at acquisitive baby boomers, not kids: she makes us salivate over china and lush gardens, and resent the human beings blocking our view.—*S.K.* (Cinema 3rd Avenue and Lincoln Square. . . . ¶ Guild; through Sept. 10.)

Return to Paradise—Three young men meet up in Malaysia and have such a ball that it's only a matter of time before fate intervenes. Sheriff (Vince Vaughn) and Tony (David Conrad) fly back to New York, leaving behind the sweetly spaced-out Lewis (Joaquin Phoenix) and, more important, a stash of hash. Two years later, Sheriff learns that Lewis was arrested in possession of the drugs and sentenced to death; only if the other two return to Malaysia and share the sentence—three years each in a hellhole—will their friend be allowed to live. It's a sharp hook for any plot, but Joseph Ruben's movie, written by Bruce Robinson and Wesley Strick, spends so long skewering us on the ethical predicament—How much should we suffer for the sake of others?—that pretty soon all you want is for Sheriff and Tony to make up their damn minds. One further complication: Lewis's lawyer, Beth (Anne Heche), falls in love with Sheriff while begging him to go to jail. The result of all this is a sort of primer on current American moviemaking: it starts off hip and loose, lightened by the presence of its young indie stars, but slowly seizes up into mainstream melodrama. The best reason to stay with it is Vaughn, whose lanky wryness wards off the threat of pomposity. The worst reason is Jada Pinkett Smith, who gets stuck with a thankless role as the unwittingly lethal villain—a newspaper journalist, of course.—*A.L.* (Chelsea Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and Village East Cinemas.)

Saving Private Ryan—Steven Spielberg's new picture, one of his best, is a sandwich. The meat of the tale concerns a bunch of U.S. Army Rangers who are sent into Normandy to rescue the sole survivor of four brothers. On either side of this bold endeavor you get half an hour of unyielding combat: first, the D Day landings on Omaha Beach and, later, a consummate last stand in which too few Americans try to hold a bridge

THEATRE ADDRESSES

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(For show times, call 777-FILM, except where noted.)

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinema I, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema II, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema 3rd Avenue, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Coronet Cinemas, Third Ave. at 59th St.
Criterion Center, Broadway at 44th St.
East 85th Street, First Ave. at 85th St.
Eastside Playhouse, Third Ave. at 55th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
86th Street East Twin, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Embassy 1, 2, and 3, Seventh Ave. at 47th St.
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
Gotham Cinema, Third Ave. at 58th St.
Guild, 33 W. 50th St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St.
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
Metro Cinema 1 and 2, Broadway at 99th St.
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 67th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Olympia I and II, Broadway at 107th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (688-3800).
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
Regency, Broadway at 67th St.
The Screening Room, 54 Varick St. (334-2100).
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
State, Broadway at 45th St.
Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
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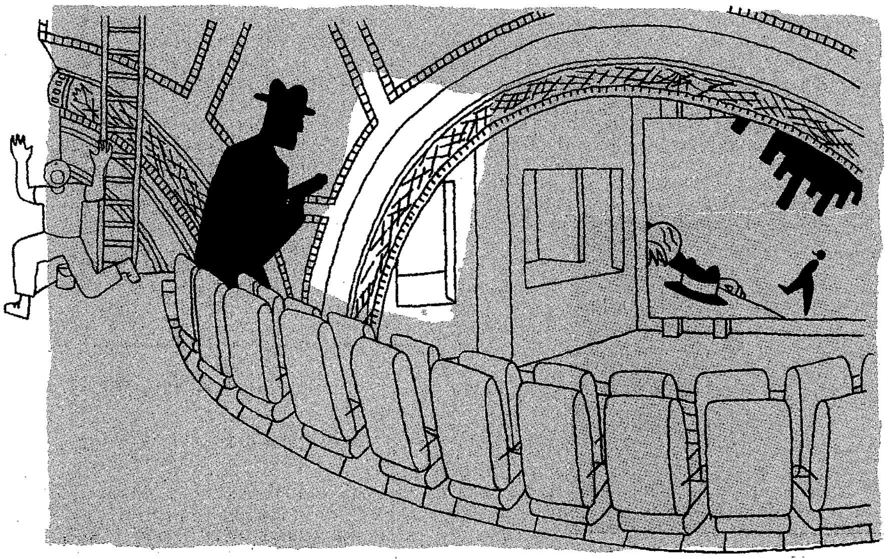
against too many Germans and too many tanks. Spielberg has arranged his violence into a semblance of pure disorder. The illusion holds, complete with severed limbs and wellsprings of blood, and it feels honorable; Spielberg's preachy movies can be an awful grind, but, apart from a disposable coda, this new work is too swift (and often too inaudible) to weigh you down.—*A.L.* (8/3/98) (Chelsea West, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, Murray Hill Cinemas, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, Village Theatre VII, and Ziegfeld.)

Snake Eyes—Set in Atlantic City, on the night of a heavyweight boxing match, Brian De Palma's new thriller features an over-emoting Nicolas Cage as Rick Santoro, a corrupt local detective who is loud and chummy and wears hideous shirts. When the Secretary of Defense (Joel Fabiani), who's in town to catch the fight, is assassinated, Santoro's moment of glory arrives: he steps in to help his old buddy, Navy Commander Kevin Dunne (Gary Sinise), cover up the fact that he left the Secretary unguarded, and orders the police to search for a suspicious-looking brunette in a blond wig (Carla Gugino). Santoro soon finds himself lost in the mists of a rapidly shifting story in which nothing is as it seems. In spite of its noirish glow, De Palma's thriller is oddly unsuspenseful.—*Daphne Merkin* (8/17/98) (Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, East 85th Street, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, Olympia, 72nd Street East, and State.)

There's Something About Mary—The Farrelly Brothers, who have tipped the outrageousness scale before (“Dumb and Dumber,” “Kingpin”), come up with some great new gross-out gags in this romantic comedy. The star, Cameron Diaz, in her Olivia Newton-John haircut, is the perfect naïve foil—she looks like she never knows what hit her. As the two loopy guys who are in love with her, Matt Dillon and Ben Stiller are garishly charming and full of desperate and irreverent ploys to get the girl. The film is packed with tasteless jokes (the best of them are crudely sexual), and it has a refreshing mean-spiritedness.—*B.D.* (Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Showplace, and Village East Cinemas.)

The Thief—Considering that Pavel Chukhrai's movie is set in the Soviet Union in the early nineteen-fifties, it's pretty easy to watch. The center of events is a young boy (Misha Philipchuk), whose mother takes up with a handsome and immoral soldier called Tolyan (Vladimir Mashkov). The three of them scoot from one set of lodgings to the next, armed with little but a sack of stolen silverware; the movie is, among other things, a dark Dickensian comedy of the nomadic—of the need to live by one's wits. As the film moves, rather too hastily, toward its resolution, you might feel cheated by a sense of emotional patness; for the most part, however, there is real grit and sting in this slight tale. In Russian.—*A.L.* (7/20/98) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Your Friends & Neighbors—Another dirty comedy of bad manners from director Neil LaBute. The contemptuous heroes of his last picture, “In the Company of Men,” were venal enough, but, compared to the inhabitants of the new movie, they seem about as noxious as the Hardy Boys. This time we are introduced to two couples: Mary (Amy Brenneman) lives with Barry (Aaron Eckhart), while Terri (Catherine Keener) lives with Jerry (Ben Stiller). Jerry starts an affair with Mary (what *does* she see in him?), Terri falls for a gallery assistant called Cheri (Nastassja Kinski), and Barry, the only sensible one, continues to have sex with himself. It's hard to care about the damage these people do to each other, since most of it will strike the audience as richly deserved. LaBute's attempt to follow in the footsteps of Restoration comedy is undercut by the fact that his dialogue is only fitfully funny, and you can't help but feel soured by the flat, ritualistic look of the action. The one enlivening performance comes, surprisingly, from Jason Patric; he plays a good-looking monster named Cary, and he has the nerve to suggest that, in a glum world, he's actually having fun.—*A.L.* (8/24-31/98) (First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and 19th Street East 6.)



BAM'S Rose Cinemas complex opens in November. The renovated area incorporates the ornate plaster proscenium arch and coffered ceilings of the original venue.

LAURENT CILLUFFO

ALSO PLAYING

ARMAGEDDON (reviewed in our issue of 7/13/98): Embassy 2 and Sutton.... **THE AVENGERS:** Chelsea West, Coronet Cinemas, Criterion Center, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, and Waverly.... **DEAD MAN ON CAMPUS:** Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Olympia, and Park & 86th Street Cinemas.... **DEEP IMPACT** (5/18/98): Worldwide Cinemas.... **THE EEL:** Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema.... **GODZILLA** (6/1/98): Worldwide Cinemas.... **THE GOVERNESS:** Paris.... **KNOCK OFF:** Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, State, and Village East Cinemas.... **LIKE IT IS:** Quad Cinema.... **THE MASK OF ZORRO:** 84th Street Sixplex, Embassy 1, and 64th and 2nd.... **NIGHTS OF CABIRIA:** Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.... **THE OPPOSITE OF SEX:** Angelika Film Center and Regency.... **π:** Angelika Film Center.... **SEE THE SEA:** Quad Cinema.... **SIX DAYS, SEVEN NIGHTS:** Worldwide Cinemas.... **SLUMS OF BEVERLY HILLS:** Angelika Film Center and 62nd & Broadway.... **SMOKE SIGNALS:** Village East Cinemas.... **THE TRUMAN SHOW** (6/15/98): Worldwide Cinemas.... **UNMADE BEDS:** The Screening Room.... **WHY DO FOOLS FALL IN LOVE:** Chelsea Cinemas, Coronet Cinemas, Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, Orpheum VII, and Village East Cinema.... **WRONGFULLY ACCUSED:** Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, 64th and 2nd, State, and Village East Cinemas.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)

Film Forum 2 and 3, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—**THEATRE 2:** Through Sept. 10: “Brazil” (1985, Terry Gilliam).... From Sept. 11: A newly edited version of “Touch of Evil” (1958, Orson Welles).... **THEATRE 3:** Through Sept. 10: “The Young Girls of Rochefort” (1967, Jacques Demy; in French).... From Sept. 11: The newly edited version of “Touch of Evil.”

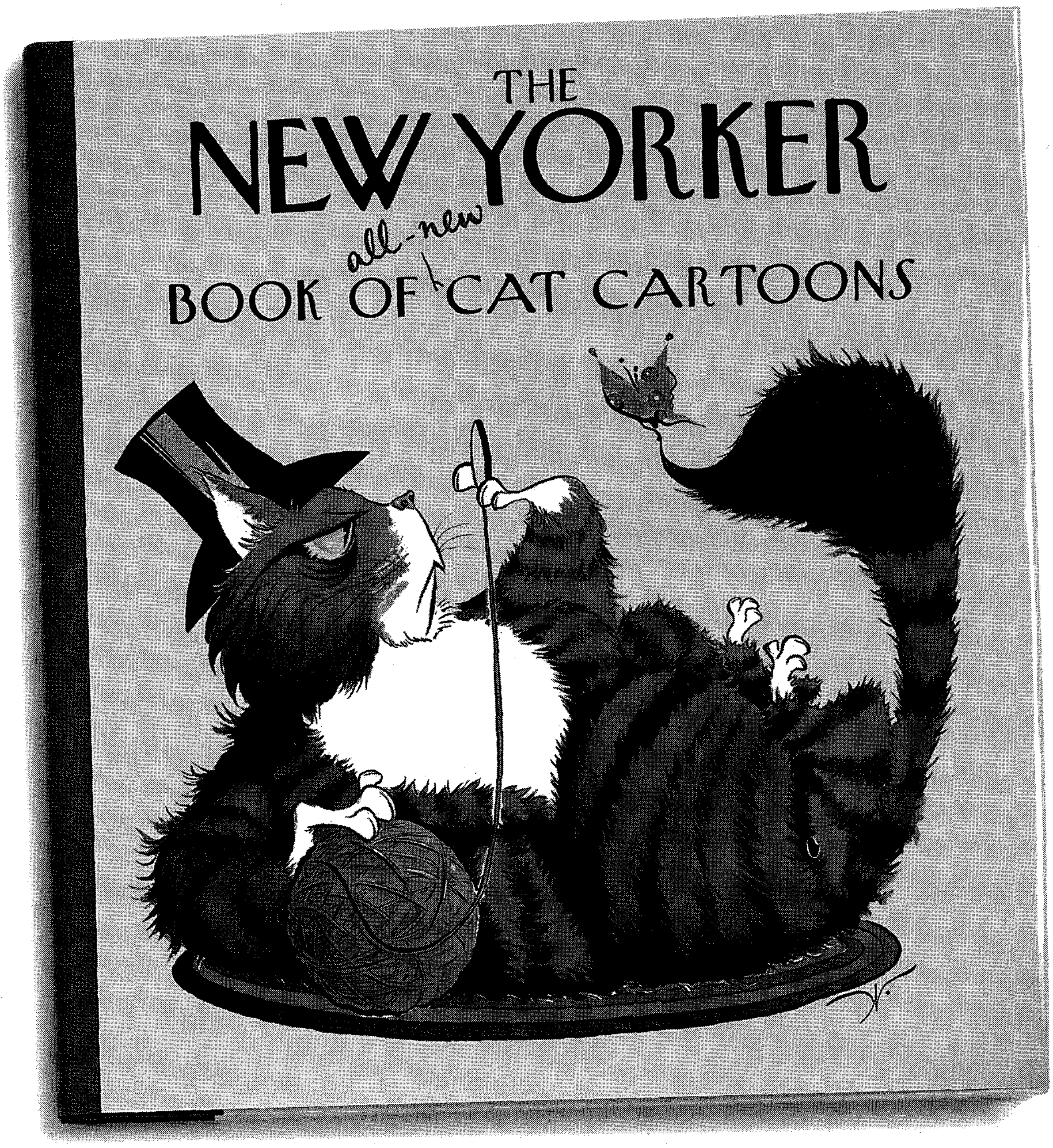
Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—Sept. 10 at 2:30: “The Bed You Sleep In” (1993, Jon Jost).... Sept. 10 at 6 and Sept. 14 at 2:30: “Underground” (1928, Anthony Asquith; silent).... Sept. 11 at 2:30 and Sept. 12 at 5: Four short films by Hal Hartley.... Sept. 11 at 3 and Sept. 13 at 2:30: “Dance of Darkness” (1989, Edin Velez) and “To Catch a Glimpse” (1997, Jean Carlomusto).... Sept. 11 at 6 and Sept. 13 at 2: Short films by Andy Warhol.... Sept. 11 at 6:30: “Split” (1981, Ardele Lister) and “The Adventures of a Nurse, Parts I and II” (1976, Eleanor Antin).... Sept. 11 at 8: “Running on Empty” (1988, Sidney Lumet).... Sept. 11 at 8:15 and Sept. 12 at 2:30: “Wax” (1991, David Blair).... Sept. 12 at 2: “Daughters of the Dust” (1991, Julie Dash).... Sept. 12 at 5: “Fourth of July in Saugerties” (1973, Ira Schneider and Beryl Korot) and “Dusi and Jenö” (1989, Péter Forgács; in Hungarian).... Sept. 13 at 5: “Love Affair” (1939, Leo McCarey).... Sept. 14 at 11 A.M.: “Empire” (1965, Andy Warhol and John Palmer).... Sept. 14 at 6: “Coming Apart” (†).... Sept. 15 at 2:30 and 6: “Ivan the Terrible, Part I” (†).

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center (875-5600)—A program of Chinese films, made between 1933 and 1949; in Mandarin, with English subtitles. Sept. 9 at 2 and 6:15: “Volcano in the Blood” (1932, Sun Yu).... Sept. 9 at 4 and 8:15: “Spring Silkworms” (1933, Cheng Bugao).... Sept. 10 at 2 and 6:15: “Small Toys” (1933, Sun).... Sept. 10 at 4:15 and 8:30: “The Highway” (1934, Sun).... Sept. 11 at 2 and 6:15: “The Goddess” (1934, Wu Yongang).... Sept. 11 at 4 and 8: “Life and Death” (1936, Ying Yunwei).... Sept. 12 at 4:30 and 8:50 and Sept. 13 at 6:40: “Crossroads” (†).... Sept. 12 at 6:40 and Sept. 13 at 4:30 and 8:50: “Tears of a Mother” (1937, Zhu Shilin).... Sept. 14 at 2 and 6:30: “Along the Sungari River” (1947, Jin Shan).... Sept. 14 at 4:30 and 9 and Sept. 15 at 2: “Radiant Sun” (1948, Cao Wu).... ¶ Weekend showings for children. Sept. 12-13 at 2: “A Tree Grows in Brooklyn” (1945, Elia Kazan).

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—Sept. 12 at 2: “The Maltese Falcon” (†).... Sept. 12 at 4: “Beat the Devil” (1953, John Huston).... Sept. 13 at 2: “The African Queen” (1951, Huston).... Sept. 13 at 4:30: “White Hunter, Black Heart” (1990, Clint Eastwood).

A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St.—A Sunday-night series of free films (and popcorn). On Sept. 13 at 7, the feature will be “Reunion in France” (1942, Jules Dassin).

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3587)—Sept. 12 at 7:30: A program of short films using the art of puppetry.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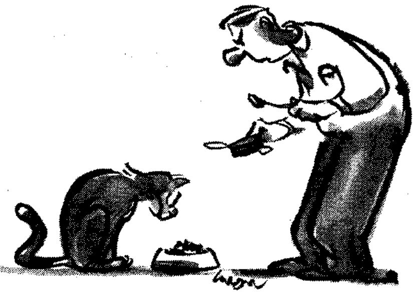

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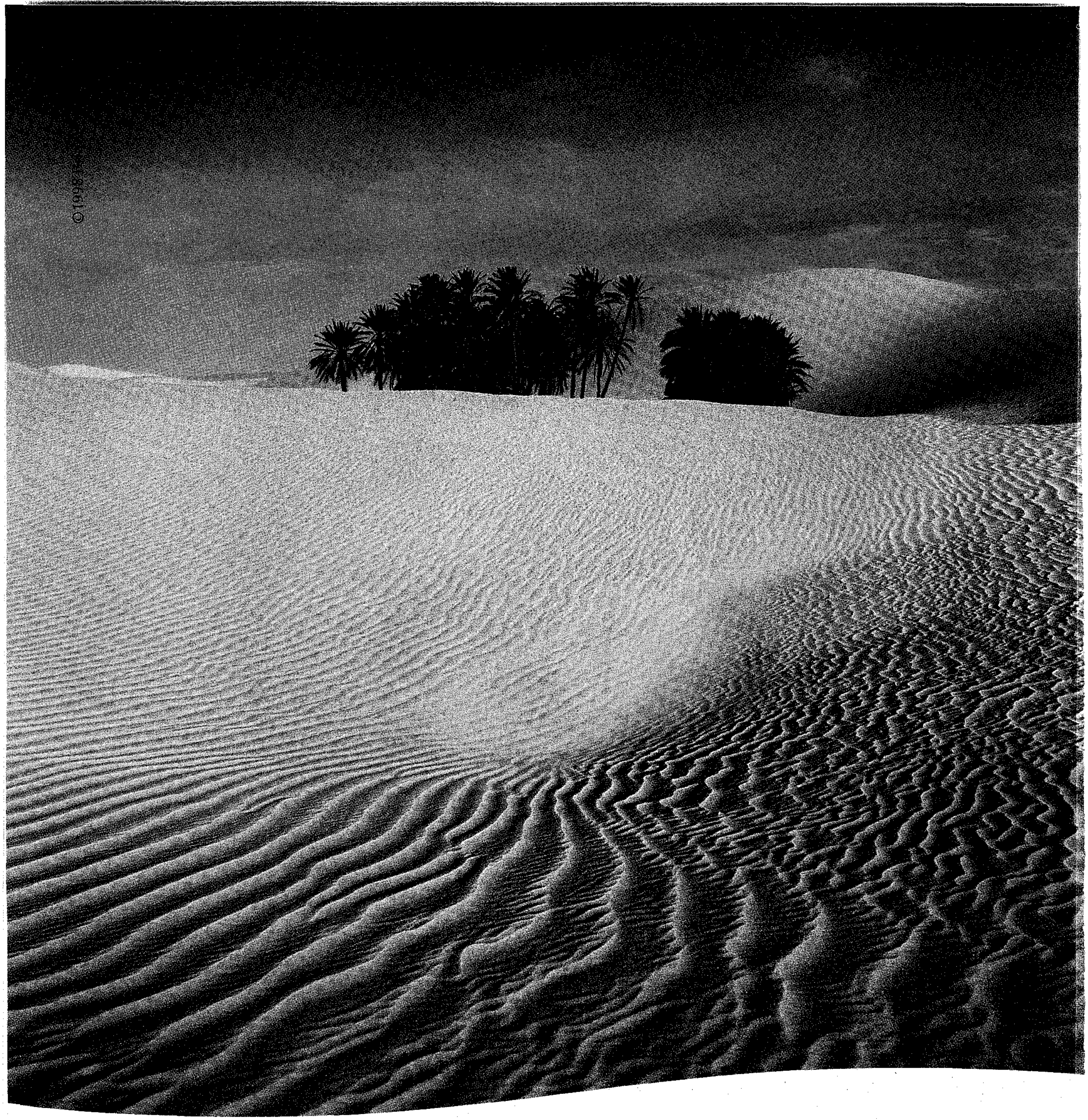

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THE TALK OF THE TOWN

THE SPORTING SCENE

Losing to Serena Williams at the U.S. Open.

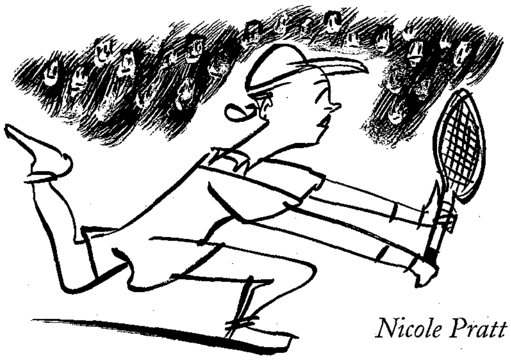
IT was a fine scene of ritual carnage out in Flushing as the United States Open tennis championships got started at the National Tennis Center last week. There are two hundred and fifty-six players in the men's and women's singles. All but two are firmly scheduled to lose. Half fall in the opening round alone. This isn't the straggling-in, something-over-par not-winning of professional golf. This is one-on-one drubbing, a hearty portion of good old-fashioned defeat—a great outer-borough bacchanal of the bitter stuff! This is having to listen to Serena Williams, who's only sixteen, tell the assembled sporting press that she played really badly against you, that a sore hamstring during her match with you hobbled her serve, causing her to double-fault, and that you just wanted to beat her so that you could say, "I beat Serena Williams," which you are still unable to say.

You, in this case, would be Nicole Pratt, a sandy-haired twenty-five-year-old Australian, currently ranked ninety-fourth in the world. Pratt turned pro in 1988, when Serena was six. Like most of the players who make it into the main draws of the Grand Slams, Pratt has a losing record in the big tournaments. Somebody has to lose to the marquee players, and Nicole Pratt is one of those fortunate professional unfortunates. Not that she goes down easily—in the Williams match, she was leading deep into the third set, and Serena outscored her by only ninety-eight to ninety-six over the whole match. How did you say you like your gall?

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

"All I ever said I wanted out of tennis was a house and the car of my choice," Pratt said, munching a bagel at the Parker Meridien on the morning after her Open loss. "And not a Ferrari or a Porsche or anything."

Pratt, who grew up on a sugarcane farm in northern Queensland, learned to play tennis on a homemade dirt court. "Dad just bulldozed out a section beside the house," she said. "We called it the Ant Bed." Since she left home at fifteen and moved across the country to Canberra on a tennis scholarship, the sport has been the obsessive center of Pratt's life. She travels eleven months a year and, between tournaments, trains in Orlando, Florida. This is, of course, perfectly normal for pros at her level. So is losing.



Nicole Pratt

Though Pratt is the No. 2 female player in Australia, she is neither rich nor famous. Clothing and equipment manufacturers do not pay her to endorse their products. (The shoes she wore in the match with Serena Williams she bought herself, for forty bucks.) She has never beaten a top-twenty player; what is probably her biggest win came last year against Florencia Labat, an Argentine, who has been ranked as high as twenty-six.

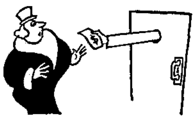
But after the Williams match (Serena is ranked twentieth) Pratt is feeling new confidence. She was not impressed by Serena's match tactics and found her vulnerable to a low, short, slice backhand. If they play again, Pratt thinks she may hit even shorter slices. In the meantime, she is not pleased that Serena spoke publicly after the match about her own double faults and loose play as if they occurred in a vacuum. "I forced her errors," Pratt said evenly.

Pratt's parents came to New York for the Open. It was only the second time they had been outside Australia. The first time was for last year's Wimbledon, where Nicole gave them a major thrill by winning her first-round match. The Slams are a rare chance for her parents to see their daughter. "Tennis Australia took her from us at an early age," her father, George, said with a slight sigh. "But we hear nothing but good reports."

On the first night of the Open, George Pratt got disturbing news. It had rained eleven inches in forty-eight hours back on the farm, and that much water could damage his new crop. He resolved to try not to worry about it. There was nothing he could do from New York, and there was plenty to occupy him here. Nicole, though out of the singles, was still in the doubles, paired with an American friend, Erika deLone. Nicole and Erika had survived the first round. Now, in the second round, they were scheduled to face Lindsay Davenport and Natasha Zvereva, the world's top-ranked team. —WILLIAM FINNEGAN

STOCK MARKET DIARY

Confessions of an unwitting bear.



LAST Monday, the day the Dow dropped five hundred and twelve points, may have been a bad day for some pensioners, but it was a very good day for me. It wasn't because I shorted the market—I don't even know what that means. It was because finally there was a day that did not make me feel incredibly stupid. On Monday, I did not miss the opportunity, as I had just about every other day for the past ten years, to buy the hot Internet or merger stocks that soared so spectacularly that I could have retired on my next-day earnings. These stocks were not arcane buys. Everyone knew that Viagra would be a big deal; nobody was surprised that Dell was a success. It would all have been within my grasp if only I had known what I was doing. On Monday, though, the stupid people looked smart for a change.

It's a little more complicated than that. I do have some money in the market, and a few years ago I joined a women's investment club. Until that time, I was as fiscally irresponsible as a person can be and still know how to make change for a dollar. My only real theory about making money in securities had to do with mutual funds. It was best to buy a fund, I reasoned, that was managed by an ugly person so that you could be sure he or she would be home every night looking after your money instead of club-hopping. Using that investment strategy, I did O.K. with mutual funds.

I was less shrewd with stocks. When I was in high school, my grandfather gave me a small amount of A.T. & T. stock. I would have preferred a Princess telephone. My holdings eventually split and became small amounts of, respectively, A.T. & T. and the seven Baby Bell stocks. I received large amounts of mail every month. My father informed me that all the dividends were being reinvested, and so I blithely threw away every official-looking letter that came from a phone company. Once in a while, I threw away my phone bill, too. Then one day I accidentally opened an envelope from U S West—or was it Bell Atlantic?—and discovered that, a while back, the company had changed its dividend-reinvestment policy and had regularly been sending me checks. Out of shame, I did not in any way try to recoup my money. Clearly, the only hope I had of making a million dollars in the stock market was for somebody to give me two million dollars and to be savvy enough to stop as soon as I lost half.

It was then that I decided to join the investment club. And it was then that I realized that I don't mind losing money. What I mind much more is having missed the opportunity to make the money that everybody else seems to be making. Since I am willing to lose my own money so that other people do not make money and consequently make me feel stupid, I have somehow concluded that mine is a noble position.

But this is all temporary. Look at Tuesday's three-hundred-point rebound. I hope it doesn't rise too steeply. If it does, I am warning you: I may be the first person in the history of the Dow Jones industrial average to jump off a bridge because of record highs.

—PATRICIA MARX

POSTCARD FROM LONDON

A literary prize gets wired.

THE Booker Prize may bear the distinction of being the only august literary institution that routinely manages to shock. Unlike our own National Book Awards, which increasingly track the *Times* best-seller list, the Booker shortlist year after year refuses to conform to popular notions of what's worth reading. (*Punch* once held up the 1984 winner, "Hotel du Lac," by Anita Brookner, as a prime example of the Booker panel's contrarian tendencies, pointing out that in it "a boring middle-aged woman spends a boring and eventless month at a Swiss hotel.")

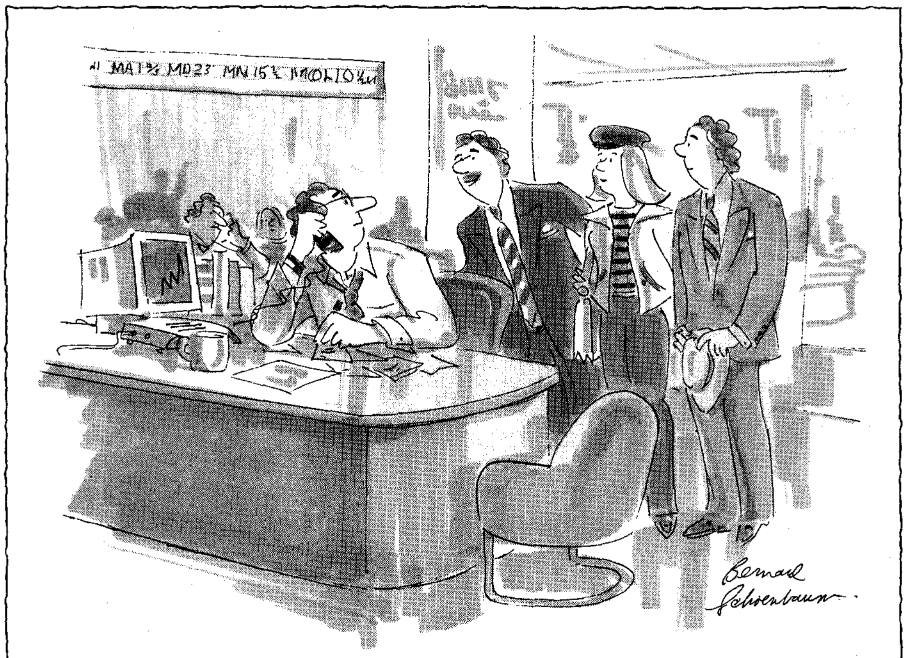
But this year the Booker looks to be creating controversy not by defying what people think of as a *good* book but by defying what they think of as a book. Martyn Goff, who has administrated the Booker Prize for twenty-eight years from his wood-panelled office in an antiquarian bookshop in Picadilly, and whose verbal manner is akin to what one would expect from Colonel Mustard, explained, "I looked it up in the rules, and they refer right throughout to the word 'book.' And if I look up 'book,' which I did, in the Oxford English Dictionary, the 'book' is something between hard covers—between boards, with pages. On the other hand, you know, one can't be a stick-in-the-mud."

These considerations led Goff to extend the privilege of being considered for this year's Booker Prize, which will be awarded on October 27th, to a novel called "The Angels of Russia," by Patricia le Roy. Ms. le Roy's book is published by a firm called Online Originals, and is only virtually available, via the Internet.

Online Originals had been quietly pursuing the cause of Internet publishing since January, 1997, without concern for either profit or plaudits. David Gettman, the outfit's managing editor and one of its founders, said, "We like to think of Online Originals as bringing publishing back to a more literary era. Because our production costs are so tiny, we don't really mind whether a book sells five copies or five hundred copies." The Online Originals Web site, at www.onlineoriginals.com, offers a total of thirty-three titles in a number of different categories, for a competitive seven dollars each. Customers can view samples of each book before deciding on a purchase, and each month one title is offered at no charge, as an enticement to the uninitiated. Once paid for with a credit card, the book is zapped to its owner, who can download it onto a PC or, better yet, a portable device called a Palm Pilot.

Last September, the *Times Literary Supplement* reviewed three titles from Online Originals, including "The Angels of Russia," which it described as "a sweeping contemporary historical romance, set against the great drama of *perestroika*," adding that it was an example of "what, in other contexts, one would call a page-turner." Gettman began to see the possibilities and contacted Goff.

Although Goff says that the Booker people quickly acquiesced when the issue of accepting "The Angels of Russia" was raised, some members of the literary community were less open-minded. Auberon Waugh, the editor of the *Literary Review*, went on the BBC television show "Newsnight" to lambaste the Booker committee for being taken in



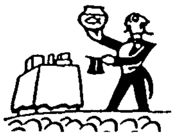
"Got a minute? A couple of young worrieds need reassuring."

by gadgetry masquerading as literature. "I think they should only judge books," he told me. "They're all just straining to be modern."

And, indeed, if the Booker is trying to bring itself into the digital age, it won't happen without difficulty. Being a game sort of fellow, Goff agreed to read "The Angels of Russia" at the publisher's request. Gettman loaned him a Palm Pilot loaded with the novel and showed him how it worked. "I watched very carefully," Goff said. "But when, the next day, I tried to operate it I found I wasn't getting anywhere." Eventually, he prevailed upon Gettman to send over a copy of the novel on plain, old-fashioned paper. —Sue Kelly

POSTSCRIPT

One eminent magician remembers the peculiar genius of another.



For all his blather, T. A. Waters was a remarkable man. He spouted, spewed, and gushed arcane information, always concluding with a complete citation from some obscure source. He was a classic autodidact. Although he discoursed on numerous topics, he was the world's foremost expert in "mentalism," the term magicians use to describe magic of the mind: the simulation of clairvoyance, telepathy, and precognition.

Waters did not finish high school in Columbus, Ohio, but took a job with a local manufacturer of goods used to conduct fraudulent séances. Among his clients were the last of the "Spook Show" workers. Waters apprenticed with these performers, who presented ghostly illusions live onstage between screenings of monster movies. After a four-year stint in Air Force intelligence, he moved to Greenwich Village in 1958. He performed, lectured, and consulted for magicians and mind readers, and worked as an investigator of the paranormal, but his greatest challenge always seemed to be paying the rent. He appeared Off-Broadway as a Shakespearean actor, and had a fling with avant-garde theatre. Always, he read. And he wrote: science fiction, fantasy, mystery, gothic novels, and books on magic and kindred phenomena. He published more than twenty books. For dust-jacket biographies, he proudly described himself as an LSD test subject. In the early nineteen-sixties, as part of an experiment at New York University, he was given a dose of the drug and then a list of some forty objects, which, as a longtime student of mnemonics, he memorized effortlessly. Hours later, blazed on acid, Waters perfectly recalled the information for his examiners.

Waters' last book, "Mind, Myth & Magick," more than eight hundred large octavo pages long, is the most exhaustive study of mentalism ever produced. "Psychologistics: An Operating Manual for the Mind," published in 1971, was his most successful book. Unfortunately, it long preceded the craze for pop-psychology-cum-occult texts of the sort that currently populate the best-seller lists. About this time, Waters moved to Venice, California. Some years later, having moved to Venice myself, I knocked on his door to say hello, and left eleven hours later. We did a lot of talking in restaurants, where at every meal he consumed a tuna-salad sandwich on wheat and a chocolate milkshake. At home, his pantry contained only Skippy peanut butter. Once, I counted nearly forty jars of it.

He was the most frustrating person I ever knew. For lots of reasons, he could not possibly accept this job or that one; he couldn't do a show because he had no means of travelling to the venue; he couldn't drive the car he owned because he couldn't afford insurance. He brought so much baggage to any occasion that you might have mistaken him for a redcap. He tested the limits of friendship—but he was a real friend. He was generous with time and generous of spirit.

Although Waters rarely performed in public, he gave charming, courtly spontaneous presentations. Once, he overheard a group of people discussing heraldry. When he was introduced to the group as a mind reader, a demonstration was requested. He asked a woman to choose any card and concentrate on her selection. Waters feigned difficulty: "I'm having a tough time with this, I'm picking up some strange words that make no sense to me." He blurted out, "I get a field of argent with charges of four lozenges in tincture of gules." An amateur vexillologist, he had described the heraldic terms for the woman's selection, the four of diamonds. The group screamed. One Friday last month, he lunched at the Magic Castle, a private club for magicians in Hollywood, where he had previously served as librarian. Walking home, he collapsed on the street near his apartment and died. He was sixty years old.

A writer friend once challenged him, "T.A., tell me something I don't know." "Have you noticed," Waters replied, "that the ants are getting larger?" —Ricky Jay

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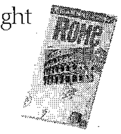

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ANNALS OF LAW

TERMS OF IMPEACHMENT

Despite the tawdriness of the Lewinsky case, the gravest of constitutional procedures is unfolding much the way the Framers intended.

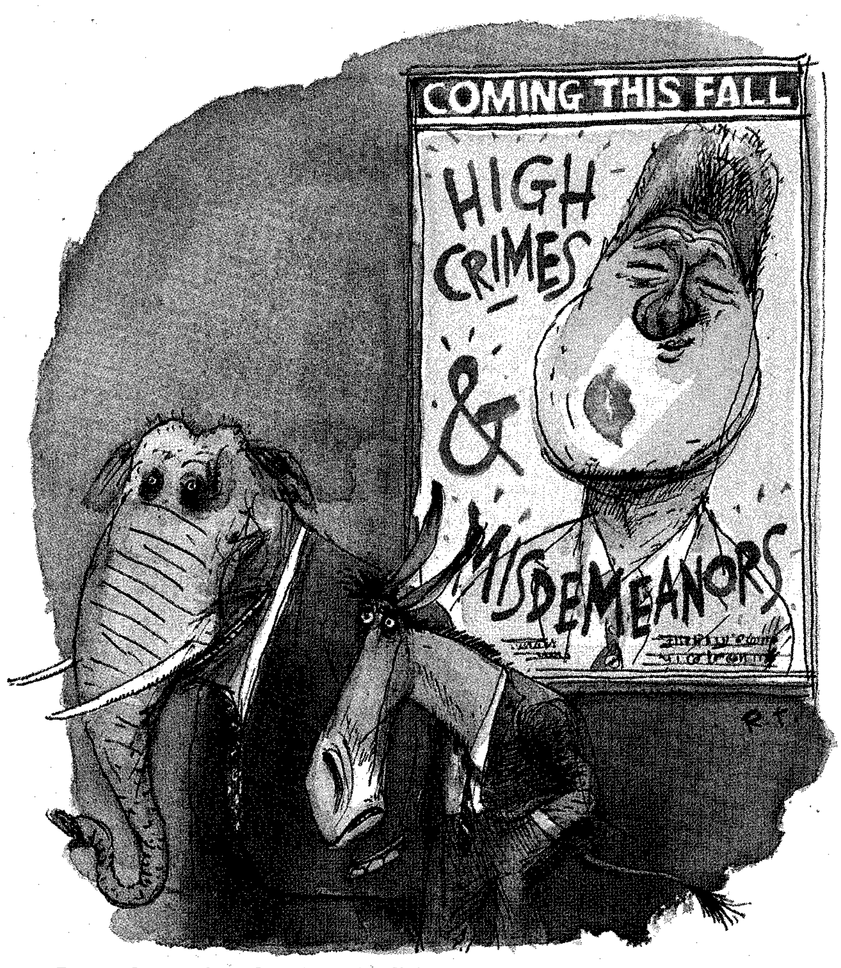
BY JEFFREY TOOBIN

IN an obscure corner of Capitol Hill, workers recently completed construction of what amounts to a small chapel dedicated to the contemplation of whether President Clinton should be impeached. In ordinary circumstances, only a hodgepodge of congressional staffers—and no actual members of the House of Representatives—work in the Gerald R. Ford House Office Building. Today, its newly renovated first-floor suite, called H2-186, sits empty and, so far, unused. To enter the suite, you will need to know both the combination to the front-door lock and a special code to disable the motion-detecting alarm system. There will be two codes—one for the majority Republicans on the House Judiciary Committee and the other for the Democrats. This ecumenism also informs the interior design of the suite: flanking a little administrative area in the middle is a single office for each party. Within these small rooms, the plan goes, members of the Judiciary Committee will read and review the report on impeachment that Kenneth Starr may submit to them as early as this month.

The austere setting belies the raucous nature of the battle that may soon begin in H2-186. Everything about the impeachment process—starting, of course, with the question of whether there should even be one—will be ferociously contested. Indeed, some skirmishing has begun, albeit in a genteel and largely behind-the-scenes way. Even the impeachment chapel—or, at least, the premise behind it—has already drawn skepticism. The idea of keeping Starr's report a secret strikes Barney Frank, the Massachusetts Democrat who serves on the Judiciary Committee, as absurd. "As soon as they send it over here, everybody on the face of the globe will know what's in it," he told me. "Ultimately, we'll say, 'Let's just put it on the Internet.'"

The impeachment of Bill Clinton exists now on the edge of plausibility. Politicians are dusting off the famous constitutional invocation of "high Crimes and Misdemeanors," examining the Framers' understanding of those resounding but vague terms, and studying the current evidence with them in mind. To a greater degree than has usually been acknowledged, the accusations against Clinton in the Monica Lewinsky investigation—perjury and obstruction of justice—conform with historically valid grounds for impeachment. But, in an odd way, the very tawdriness of the potential case against the President may work in his favor. Impeachments of all kinds turn on dense, factual inquiries, and Congress may collectively lack the will to ask the necessary questions before a television audience. The President has, for example, apparently asserted under oath that his conduct with Lewinsky did not constitute sexual relations as that term was defined in the Paula Jones sexual-harassment case. Clinton's legal position appears to be that Lewinsky may have been having sex with him but he wasn't having sex with her. So Congress may have to determine what, exactly, they were doing with each other. In Watergate, the famous question was: What did the President know and when did he know it? In this story, the relevant query may be: Where were the President's hands? On such questions, indeed, the future of the Clinton Presidency may turn.

The politicians who will decide the President's fate have been struggling to strike the right tone on the issue, and no one has been having a harder time of it than the House Speaker, Newt Gingrich, who will probably have the greatest say in determining the scope of any impeachment inquiry. Over the years, Gingrich has endured a lot of critical attention paid to his own personal life, so he may be skittish about the accusations made against the President. In an interview with the Washington *Post* last month, Gingrich said he believed that only "a pattern of felonies," not "a single human mistake," should warrant impeachment hearings. As the *Post* headline put it, the Speaker had "raised the bar" on impeachment. Some Republicans, fearing a retreat by the Speaker, assailed his accommodationist remarks. In response, Gingrich declared, in effect, that the bar had not been raised after all.



Impeachment is a doctrine of politics more than it is a doctrine of law, and its currency is the currency of power rather than of virtue.

RICHARD THOMPSON

The bipartisan discomfort with the unseemliness of the Lewinsky story obscures a central truth about the capital's nascent impeachment drama—that it is unfolding very much in the spirit of the Framers' intent. At its core, impeachment is a doctrine of politics more than law, and its currency is power rather than virtue. So it is not surprising that the impeachment process will probably be emblematic of the entire Lewinsky imbroglio—a brimming mixture of high principle and low comedy. Even the tactics that have predominated during the last seven months seem destined to be recapitulated in this new setting, with Republicans struggling to generate popular outrage about the President's behavior and Democrats trying to keep the focus on his unpopular prosecutor. But now the stakes are higher, not just for Clinton but for Congress and the country, as an idea that was born late in the fourteenth century meets a soiled blue dress from the Gap.

THE final wording of the provision for impeachment in the Constitution emerged from a brief debate among some of the greatest of the Framers, on September 8, 1787, in Philadelphia. The working draft of the document allowed Congress to remove the President only for bribery and for treason, but George Mason, fearing an unduly powerful chief executive, proposed that "maladministration" be added as another ground for impeachment. His fellow-Virginian James Madison objected, because "so vague a term will be equivalent to a tenure during pleasure of the Senate." Gouverneur Morris added a similar point, noting that "an election of every four years will prevent maladministration." As an alternative, Mason offered to add instead a phrase that had been used in English law as early as 1386—"high Crimes and Misdemeanors."

Today, the word "misdemeanor" suggests a minor or trivial offense, but the Framers had a very different understanding of it. In eighteenth-century England, high misdemeanors referred to offenses against the state, as opposed to those against property or other people. Thus, from the start, impeachment was meant to police those who abused the powers of their office. As Charles Cotesworth Pinckney said in the debate over ratification of the Constitution in South Carolina, impeachment was for "those who behave amiss, or betray their public trust."

Madison prevailed in the debate in Philadelphia, and "Treason, Bribery, or other high Crimes and Misdemeanors" has defined the terms of impeachment for Presidents, Vice-Presidents, and "civil officers" such as federal judges through all of American constitutional history. (The remaining provisions are straightforward. If the House passes an impeachment of a President by a simple majority, the matter moves to the Senate for a trial, presided over by the Chief Justice of the United States. A vote by two-thirds of the Senate is required for removal from office.)

For all its august beginnings, though, the early history of impeachment in this country unfolded largely by negative example. The two most celebrated instances were fiascoes. In 1805, Justice Samuel Chase, a Federalist serving on the Supreme Court, was impeached on politically motivated charges of judicial bias raised by his Jeffersonian adversaries; he then narrowly avoided conviction in the Senate. The low point in impeachment history took place in 1868, when a bitter Reconstruction-era political battle nearly drove President Andrew Johnson from office. Radical Republicans, who controlled the House and despised Johnson, had passed, over his veto, a plainly unconstitutional restriction on the President's power to fire members of his Cabinet. Johnson tested the law by firing his Secretary of War, Edwin M. Stanton, and the House responded by voting to impeach the President. Johnson avoided conviction in the Senate by one vote.

After the Chase and Johnson debacles, the impeachment process largely fell into disuse, except for the occasional removal of judges, so when the House Judiciary Committee began considering impeachment charges against President Richard M. Nixon, in late 1973, the special counsel leading the inquiry, John Doar, made an effort to tease out useful strands of the history of impeachment. He recruited the Yale historian C. Vann Woodward to lead the study of misconduct by all the Presidents before Nixon. "After I told John Doar I would do it," Woodward told me recently, "he directed me to a Miss Rodham on his staff to settle the details of my contract."

HILLARY RODHAM, who was twenty-six at the time, joined Doar's staff just a few months after she graduated from Yale Law School, and today she ranks as the most celebrated alumna of the staff of the Watergate-era Judiciary Committee. Her tenure there, it seems, was unremarkable. She worked hard, impressed her colleagues and superiors with her intelligence, and, not surprisingly, had virtually no decision-making authority. However, the future First Lady's connection to the Woodward report did involve her in a minor and mostly forgotten controversy from that period, but one with some relevance to her husband's current ordeal.

Doar summoned Woodward to Washington in May of 1974, just as the impeachment hearings were heating up. The professor's assignment was simple to define, if difficult to execute. "He asked me to prepare a study of misconduct in previous Administrations and of how the Presidents had responded to charges of misconduct," Woodward recalled. At the heart of the assignment were vexing questions. "If all previous offenders escaped punishment, why make an exception of the most recent?" Woodward later wrote. "What was so distinctive about the offenses of President Nixon as to justify very special treatment and set him apart from all the others?"

Time was short, however, and when Woodward met his deadline, of early July, events were galloping toward a conclusion. Doar and his team decided not to present the historian's findings to the members of the committee before they began voting on articles of impeachment, on July 27th. Nixon announced his resignation on August 8th. But in late September Charles Wiggins, a California Republican, who was Nixon's strongest defender on the committee, learned of the Woodward study. In a letter to Peter Rodino, the committee's chairman, Wiggins asserted that he had asked early in the impeachment process for research to "furnish a standard against which to test the alleged abusive conduct of Richard Nixon." Wiggins suggested that Woodward's report "may have been intentionally suppressed by the staff during the course of our investigation."

In a letter back to Wiggins, on October 3, 1974, Rodino confirmed the committee's role in the report but denied any improper motive in his decision to keep it from the members. "Hillary Rodham of the impeachment inquiry staff coördinated the work," Rodino wrote, adding that Doar and his colleagues "did not think the material was usable by the committee in its existing form and had not had time to modify it so it would have practical utility for the members of the committee."

At this late date, it is difficult to imagine that Woodward's dry and straightforward study—it covers matters ranging from the censure, by the Senate, of Andrew Jackson, in 1834, to the arrest, on morals charges, of Lyndon Johnson's special assistant Walter Jenkins, in 1964—would have made much difference in the resolution of the Nixon case. But Wiggins had an understandable complaint. Against what standard is Congress supposed to weigh a President's behavior? The question then, as now, was how to define "high Crimes and Misdemeanors."

Doar summoned one of his law-school classmates, Joseph A. Woods, Jr., from his practice in Oakland to lead the committee's task force on constitutional issues. "Right at the beginning of the committee's work, Chairman Rodino wanted a background document that outlined what were the grounds for impeachment," I was told by Woods, who is now seventy-three and is semi-retired. Woods put about ten lawyers from the staff to work on the question, including not only the future First Lady but also William Weld, who later served as governor of Massachusetts.

The report of the Woods task force, which was published in February, 1974, has framed the terms of all subsequent impeachment debates. (There have been a total of fifteen impeachments—of twelve judges, one Cabinet member, one senator, and one President. The most recent were in 1989, when the federal judges Walter L. Nixon, Jr., of Mississippi, and Alcee L. Hastings, of Florida, were impeached and then removed from office. Judge Nixon had been convicted of perjury, and Hastings lost his trial in the Senate even though he had been acquitted of bribery charges in a criminal trial. Following his expulsion, Hastings won election to Congress, where he still serves as a representative from the Miami area.)

The Woods team defined impeachment broadly, asserting that not all crimes were impeachable offenses and that not all impeachable offenses were crimes, either. "The criminal law sets a general standard of conduct that all must follow," they wrote. "It does not address itself to the abuses of presidential power. In an impeachment proceeding a President is called to account for abusing powers that only a President possesses." This was a controversial point at the time—that impeachable offenses need not also be crimes—but it has become the conventional wisdom. For example, it would be no crime for a President to move to a foreign country and refuse to return, but, just as surely, such conduct would be grounds for impeachment. A decisive factor, it seems, is conduct that fatally compromises the President in his ability to do his job.

Woods recalled, "We thought the most important thing was the 'take Care' clause of the Constitution"—the provision of Article II that defines the President's duty as being to "take Care that the Laws be faithfully executed." Woods continued, "That's the crux of the job of President of the United States, and its violation is the basis of considering whether his conduct ought to be rewarded with impeachment. Late at night or early in the morning, we used to sit around and theorize hypotheticals about whether various kinds of behavior would or would not constitute impeachable conduct. The message that developed out of all of this was that it was a perversion of the office

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as an office." As the report states, impeachment is a "remedy addressed to serious offenses against the system of government," and impeachable offenses are "constitutional wrongs that subvert the structure of government, or undermine the integrity of office and even the Constitution itself."

As it happens, the Woods task force didn't quote the most famous public utterance on the subject of impeachment, though their labors would lead to its author's becoming President. On April 15, 1970, Representative Gerald R. Ford took to the well of the House to speak in favor of the impeachment of Justice William O. Douglas, of the Supreme Court, on the ground of supposed financial conflicts of interest. "An impeachable offense," Ford said, "is whatever a majority of the House of Representatives considers it to be at a given moment in history." The effort to evict Douglas quickly fizzled when the allegations proved unfounded, and Ford's remark has drawn scorn from scholars over the years, but it does capture the inherently political nature of all impeachment controversies. "We went to the beginning of time, and there was no clear answer to what makes an impeachable offense," says Evan Davis, a New York lawyer and a candidate for state Attorney General, who also served on the Judiciary Committee staff. "So we decided, in the end, that it was up to each member, first in the Judiciary Committee, then in the full House, then in the Senate, to define it for themselves. It was up to them."

In retrospect, what is so striking about Watergate is that American politicians did reach consensus on the fate of the President. Nixon resigned only after the elders in his own party told him that they could no longer support him. In this regard, young Hillary Rodham reflected her time. To be sure, she was hired by the committee's Democrats, but it was the momentum of public opinion, and not the enthusiasms of eager staffers, that finally drove the President from office. "She was a fine young woman. I thought very, very highly of her," Woods says. "She was very diligent in her work. One of the features of that staff was that there wasn't much politics. We didn't have hawks and doves. We all just did our jobs."

CONSENSUS—on impeachment or anything else—is about the last thing anyone expects to find on the current House Judiciary Committee, which resembles the Rodino panel only in name. Today, among the members and their staffs, hawks and doves predominate.

In this respect, the Judiciary Committee reflects changes that have overtaken the House as a whole during the past quarter century. In 1974, the balance of power on the committee belonged to a quartet of moderate Republicans—Hamilton Fish, Jr., of New York; Tom Railsback, of Illinois; M. Caldwell Butler, of Virginia; and William S. Cohen, of Maine (now the Secretary of Defense)—who joined with several Southern Democrats in what was known informally as the Unholy Alliance. Their decision to turn on the President and vote for impeachment meant the end of the Nixon Presidency. But on today's committee, and in Congress generally, the moderates are mostly gone. In fact, Judiciary is even more polarized than most committees. "It's not a committee that you join if you care about bringing home pork," a congressional staff member familiar with the committee says. "It's a committee for activists, the hard core of both parties." To a great degree, the members of the committee have safe seats—twenty-nine of the thirty-six members were last elected with at least sixty per cent of the vote—so they have little reason to fear retaliation at the polls for taking controversial stands. For example, of all the Republicans in Congress, the Judiciary members seem among the least likely to worry about the political hazard of making Vice-President Gore the incumbent in the 2000 election, because, the committee source says, "these people—God help us—they vote their consciences."

The members of the Judiciary Committee include such *echt* urban liberals as Los Angeles's Maxine Waters and New York's Jerrold Nadler, and also a trio of African-American members who were elected after federally mandated redistricting in the South: Bobby Scott, of Virginia; Melvin Watt, of North Carolina; and Sheila Jackson Lee, of Texas. The ranking Democrat is the Detroit liberal John Conyers, who is the senior member of the Congressional Black Caucus. I have heard the committee described as "where the Third World meets the nerd world," because the majority Republicans tend to be Southern and suburban, with the sort of bland, straitlaced personas that produce low national profiles. Charles Canady, of Florida, who has led the fight to abolish affirmative action by the federal government, fits this mold. The fifteen Democrats include three women, and the twenty-one Republicans just one—

Victoria Roberts

"Yes, we are taking in laundry."

Mary Bono, who was elected earlier this year to succeed her late husband, Sonny.

Henry Hyde, of Illinois, silver-maned, rotund, and seventy-four years old, has chaired the committee since the Republicans won control of Congress in 1994. Known as an extreme conservative in his early years in the House—the so-called Hyde Amendment, first passed in 1978, bans federal funding of abortions—he has watched the center of gravity in the House shift so far that he now counts as a relative moderate. He has kept a low profile as impeachment talk has grown, and his special counsel on the issue, a sixty-eight-year-old defense lawyer and Democrat from Chicago named David Schippers, reflects Hyde's cautious approach. "Henry knows his place in history turns on how all this turns out," says a committee staffer familiar with Hyde's thinking, "so he's not going to be rushing into doing anything."

But the go-slow option is losing support among Hyde's constituents on the committee. The right wing of the Judiciary Committee is anchored by the two-term Georgia Republican Bob Barr, a former prosecutor and C.I.A. analyst, who may be the premier Clinton-hater in Congress. Barr filed a resolution in the House for an impeachment inquiry on Clinton on November 5, 1997—two months before the Lewinsky story broke. (The resolution now has twenty-two co-sponsors, including Lindsey Graham, of South Carolina, another member of the Judiciary Committee.) Impeachment seemed like an almost nutty idea at the time, and Barr drew mocking attention in the press, but now he looks like a prophet.

"If Starr sends us a report, I think we have an obligation to review it immediately, whether it's the day before the election or the day after," Barr told me. "Short of a national-security emergency, there is nothing more important that we could be dealing with."

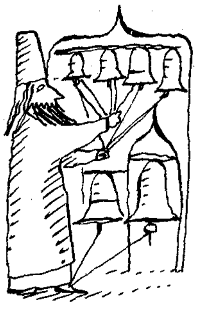
BARR'S doppelgänger is Barney Frank—quick-witted, funny, famously dishevelled. (Shortly before I arrived at his office not long ago, he had set his shirt on fire while attempting to light a cigar.) A Bayonne native, whose district encompasses Brookline and other suburbs of Boston, Frank is expected to serve as the President's chief defender on the committee, not least because his sister Ann Lewis is Clinton's communications director at the White House.

Frank plainly regards the prospect of an impeachment fight with much gusto and some amusement. "They're trying to impeach this guy for lying about his sex life," he mused at one point. "But you're talking to a guy who's been criticized for *not* lying about my sex life. People say, 'Why don't you go live your life and don't tell us about it?'" (Frank is gay.) As for the President's legal predicament, however, Frank offered only a measured, tactical defense. For one thing, he rejects Barr's call for immediate public hearings. "What's the rush?" he asks. "There's no reason not to wait until after the elections." And Frank has clear ideas—shared by other Democrats—about the scope of the hearings on Starr's report. "We will have hearings on the report," he said. "It is not at all clear that we will have hearings on impeachment."

This difference—between hearings on an impeachment report and hearings on impeachment—is more than just semantics. John Conyers, in particular, has been an outspoken critic of Starr, repeatedly calling for his firing by the Attorney General, and Democrats on the committee would clearly love to devote their efforts to exploring Starr's tactics rather than the President's behavior. "Janet Reno is an idiot for not firing Starr a long time ago," Jerrold Nadler, of New York, told me. "His conduct is egregious. He is insensitive to civil liberties. He leaks. He's broken the law in a half a dozen different ways over there."

The subject of Starr is safe ground for the Democrats, because, although Starr seems destined to remain unpopular forever, the President's conduct appears increasingly difficult to defend. Nadler, for his part, had little to say about Clinton. "I'm very torn about a lot of things in the whole situation," he said. "There will be plenty of time to comment when a few more shoes drop. I learned a long time ago not to comment about something when I'm very angry." Nadler's mood probably wasn't improved when he plowed into a homework assignment that he and the other Democrats on the Judiciary Committee received from their staff over the August recess—a thick binder of readings on the history and law of impeachment.

Democrats have not thrived on Capitol Hill during the Clinton years, and few representatives regard the President with affection. "The Democrats lost the House because of Clinton in '94," one prominent Democrat says. "Then they didn't get it back in '96, because the campaign-finance story broke in the last weeks before the election. Those people don't feel like they owe him anything."



Some Democrats have discussed the possibility that Congress might pass a "censure" or "reprimand" of Clinton for his conduct in the Lewinsky matter—a move that would provide an outlet for dissatisfaction with the President but would have little practical effect. Robert Wexler, a first-term Democrat, from south Florida, seems determined to take the most pro-Clinton position on the committee, but even he has come to his support in a backhanded way. "The President has admitted an affair outside of marriage," Wexler told me. "It's wrong, it's ugly, it's despicable, it's many things—but it's not impeachable." For the moment, House Democrats appear to be staking out an anti-Starr rather than a pro-Clinton position.

The Judiciary Committee Democrats have hired Abbe Lowell, a prominent Washington lawyer, as their chief counsel on impeachment. In a city full of "trial lawyers" who never appear in court, Lowell has the reputation of a genuine courtroom professional who also knows his way around Capitol Hill. "Our first job is to consider Starr's report," he told me. "Then we'll see if there's anything else to do." The hiring of Lowell also says a good deal about the Democrats' tactics. One of the doleful side benefits of the Clinton years is that congressional Democrats have developed considerable expertise in scandal damage control. Each time Republicans like Senators Al D'Amato and Fred Thompson or Representative Dan Burton have sought to use hearings to embarrass the President in particular and Democrats in general, the efforts have largely boomeranged. Lowell hopes to continue this tradition.

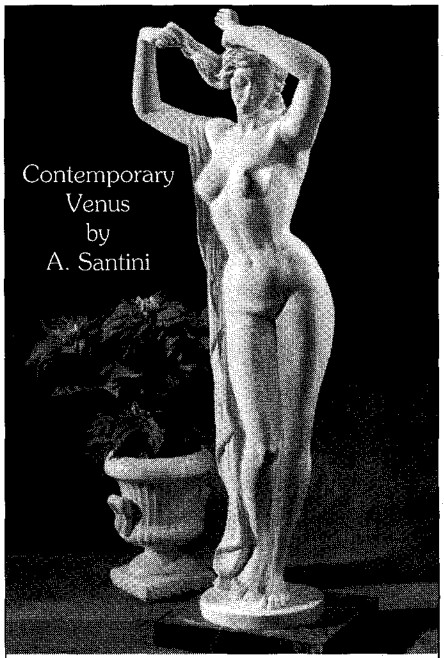
But the Democrats on the Judiciary Committee have made another hire, one that may reveal even more about their true agenda for the impeachment battle. One of Lowell's deputies will be Deborah L. Rhode, a professor of law at Stanford and one of the nation's leading authorities on sexual harassment. "I do take it as a good sign that they wanted somebody who does ethics full time to be part of the team and also someone who works on issues of gender inequality," Rhode told me recently. "Nobody wants a replication of the Hill-Thomas hearings, and nobody wants the Administration to come out with statements like 'trailer trash.'"

In other words, Rhode is a sort of insurance policy—but for congressional Democrats, not for the White House. A full impeachment hearing may well ripple with difficult gender issues. How much is Lewinsky herself responsible for her relationship with Clinton? Is an intern really capable of informed consent to a relationship with a President? When, if ever, are bosses and subordinates allowed to have sex with one another? If the Democrats in Congress find themselves forced to choose between their President and their women constituents, Rhode's hiring suggests that the choice may have already been made.

There is still considerable uncertainty about how the Judiciary Committee's deliberations will proceed. It appears that when the House receives notice that delivery of Starr's report is imminent, the full House will pass a "referral resolution" that will give the committee jurisdiction over the report and limit access to committee members and probably some members of their staffs. This process is raising partisan tensions. Last week, Republican staffers from the Rules Committee—a group closely aligned with Gingrich and the House leadership—began participating in the drafting of the referral resolution. Democrats would prefer it if that task stayed with Hyde's Judiciary Committee, which has a more evenhanded reputation. At the same time, Democrats are unhappy that Hyde has given them only four positions for staff members; the Republicans have fourteen. Starr's report will certainly contain grand-jury testimony, and the Independent Counsel may feel obligated to obtain permission from Judge Norma Holloway Johnson for its disclosure before he provides it to Congress. Lawyers for the Secret Service agents who testified before the grand jury have already filed objections to Starr's release of any of their testimony. Such objections could probably be resolved in a week or so. But, barring major unforeseen roadblocks, the committee members may be taking turns in the impeachment chapel later this month. (The different alarm codes for Democrats and Republicans in the chapel are designed to help identify leakers.)

Several Republicans are staking out the position that any false sworn testimony by the President, even in his civil deposition in the Paula Jones case, constitutes valid grounds for impeachment. "If I am personally making the decision sitting as a member of the House Judiciary Committee, and I conclude after reviewing all the evidence that the President of the United States lied under oath in a judicial proceeding, I would vote to take the matter forward," the committee's third-ranking Republican, Bill McCollum, told me. "The President has the position of the highest law-enforcement official in the land, and he has to be held accountable." For the same conduct, Robert Wexler, the Florida Democrat, would give the President a pass. "Even if it were to be established that the President lied in his deposition, it is regrettable, wrong, and unfortunate, but it still relates to a private matter," Wexler said. "He shouldn't be impeached for it."

Neither Congressman is right—or wrong. The Constitution consigns these calibrations to the members' political judgment. In their own way, they are approaching the question as Alexander Hamilton suggested that they should, in Federalist No. 65. Impeachable offenses, Hamilton wrote, "are of a nature which may with peculiar propriety be denominated POLITICAL, as they relate chiefly to injuries done immediately to the society itself." Just so, say Clinton's defenders—and they add that initiating, and then covering up, an unwise sexual affair does not hurt society at all. But society changes, and yesterday's gaffe may be today's high crime. Until 1974, few people probably thought that "making false or misleading public statements for the purpose of deceiving the people of the United States" constituted grounds for impeachment, either. But that is from Article I of the impeachment of Richard Nixon, and it passed the Judiciary Committee with bipartisan support. ◆



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POSTCARD FROM MOSCOW

SCENES FROM A MIRAGE

Awkward moments, frayed relationships.

BY JOE KLEIN

As Bill Clinton and Boris Yeltsin met last week for what could easily turn out to be their last summit, the grand Russian tradition of extravagant pessimism almost seemed justified. The economy was a wreck. The ruble could not be pegged; no Russian knew what his money was worth. No one knew who was running the government, or even if there was a government, beyond the sad, frail figurehead in the Kremlin.

Given the overpowering mess, this summit of two wounded and degraded leaders went almost unnoticed by the Russian press and television. The front page of *Kommersant*, the principal business newspaper, was dominated by a photograph of the Communist Party leader, Gennadi Zyuganov, whose methodical blandness during the 1996 Presidential campaign had been replaced by a florid tactical militance. Zyuganov said that Yeltsin was "an out-and-out drunk," who was pushing Russia "toward civil war." And General Aleksandr Lebed, the once and future Presidential candidate with a fabulous *basso* voice but a not very *profondo* agenda, said that the Army was in a "revolutionary mood" and the country "on the verge of a social explosion."

The arrival of a United States President—armed with little more than a dour speech about the need for Russians to "play by the rules" of the global economy—could only be a nostalgic sideshow. Not even Yeltsin's weird attempts at choreography when he greeted his American counterpart on Tuesday at the Kremlin were much noticed. Confronted by a phalanx of photographers, the Russian President turned the wrong way, with his back to the press. (Yeltsin insisted that it was the press that was positioned the wrong way.) Finally, Bill Clinton gently pointed him toward the cameras while an aghast Russian entourage admired the ceiling.

The headline in *Kommersant* was "CLINTON HAS COME WITHOUT MONEY." The subhead was "BUT WITH DEMANDS." Even the Moscow *Times*, an influential English-language daily that serves the expatriate community, didn't see fit to mention Clinton's presence in town until the seventh paragraph of its lead story about the Duma's rejection of Yeltsin's would-be Prime Minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin. (The paper did run a large photograph of Boris and Bill.) On its editorial page, the *Times* mocked Clinton's wan exhortations to stay the market course: "Ah, yes, it's so clear now! The easy thing to do is not the right thing to do; the right thing to do would be not to go back and do it the way they did it before." The editorial continued, more seriously, "Yet never have the Western democracies or the international lending institutions publicly criticized the national government's corruption. Hardly a peep was heard from the White House or the World Bank about, for example, the flagrantly rigged privatization of the oil, metal, and gas companies."

For Boris Yeltsin, the arrival of a United States President in the Kremlin at this historical moment could be regarded as little more than a nostalgic sideshow.

N. ASCENCIOS

By comparison, the floating Clinton family drama—the obsession of the American press—seemed as weightless to the Russian hosts as one of the popular Mexican soap operas on Russian television.

On Tuesday afternoon, the President and the First Lady made their first joint appearance since the Monica testimony. They visited a school—something they've done almost as frequently together as going to church. Such visits are usually the surest way to lift the President's spirits, and Elementary School No. 19, just across the Moscow River from the Kremlin, seemed a picture-perfect place. Rachmaninoff taught there; it had been voted the school of the year in Moscow for the past three years. The bright-eyed children sang and danced, but under the circumstances the President would probably have required nothing less than the Boys Choir of Harlem to ease his pain. For the travelling press, the real mission seemed to be the close observation of the First Family's body language. From my notes: "C mouth open, with his usual semi-amazed 'Ain't this just grand!' look, touches H on arm, says something appreciative, H smiles and nods."

But my impression was soon contradicted by the First Lady's introduction of her husband: it was immediately noted by several American reporters that she neglected to call him "my husband," as she usually does when she introduces him. Now he was "Bill Clinton, the President of the United States." Then came more body language: "B touches H gently on shoulder as she passes. H stares straight ahead."

After the elementary-school stop, Clinton went on to Moscow State University, to deliver his lecture on the global economy to an audience of future diplomats who were either *extremely* polite or heavily anesthetized. The setting immediately brought to mind an electric speech that he had given two months earlier at Beijing University. The highlight then had been the President's fencing with students prepared with carefully worded—and decidedly pro-government—questions. That had been Clinton at his very best. But Clinton took no questions in Moscow, nor did he make any spontaneous public stops in the city: there was no wading into happy crowds—none of the usual summit fanfare. Indeed, the motorcade route was quite bereft of curious civilians. A sad summit on a dreary, drippy September day.

THE two Presidents held their final joint press conference in the spectacular vaulted rotunda of the Kremlin's Catherine Hall, whose nineteenth-century architect had surely imagined a space populated by more majestic leaders. "If the reform process can be completed," Clinton said, as if inviting more derision from the Moscow *Times*, "then I, for one, would be strongly supportive of greater assistance to Russia from the United States and the other big economic powers."

At the very end of an extremely limited question period, Laurence McQuillan, of Reuters, attempted a twofer: He asked Yeltsin if there were any circumstances under which he might be forced by the Communist-led Duma to accept someone other than Viktor Chernomyrdin as the next Prime Minister of Russia. Then, without waiting for an answer, he asked Clinton about the disappointment in some quarters about his lack of "a formal apology" in the Lewinsky affair.

Neither President seemed to move. Two men known for their energy—and their energy in defending themselves in the face of hostility—were suddenly caught mute. They glanced at each other, and may have shrugged. It was a moment reminiscent of the old game show "To Tell the Truth." One waited for an announcer to say, "Will the real President of a major nuclear power please stand up?"

Finally, Yeltsin, who looked much more sallow than he usually does, began a halting, bizarre answer about Chernomyrdin's fate: "Well." Pause. "I must say." Pause. "We will witness quite a few events for us to be able to achieve all those results." Full stop. There was a rustling in the press corps, on both the Russian and the American sides of the aisle, amounting to a whispered "Huh?" "That's all," Yeltsin concluded.

"That's my answer, too," Clinton said, with a laugh, trying to joke past Yeltsin's incomprehension. "That was pretty good."

Clinton then assayed yet another in what is likely to be an endless series of quasi-apologetic re-statements of "profound regret," this time including "all who were hurt and all who were involved" in the Lewinsky debacle. The President spoke easily—but stubbornly. He said that he had reread his speech and didn't see anything wrong with it. He wasn't giving ground. He would try to proceed with business as usual.

And that was that. Yeltsin abruptly announced, "Thank you for your kind attention." The ceremony was over. One of Clinton's foreign-policy advisers tried to put the best face on the situation. "Say what you want, but I like the timing of this," he told me. "It's important that we're here, hitting them with the message of reform. If we didn't, no one else would be. The reformers are weak now. It's good that Yeltsin and Chernomyrdin are hearing it from someone, even if the prognosis isn't great."

In any case, Bill Clinton didn't appear unduly distressed to be leaving town and heading off to Ireland, where he remains a hero and the reception was considerably more ecstatic. But one did wonder if the Moscow emptiness was premonitory—if the last two years of Clinton's term would be an endless procession of sad non-moments, defiant quasi-apologies, and awkward body language. ♦

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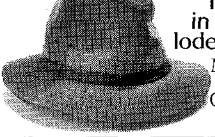

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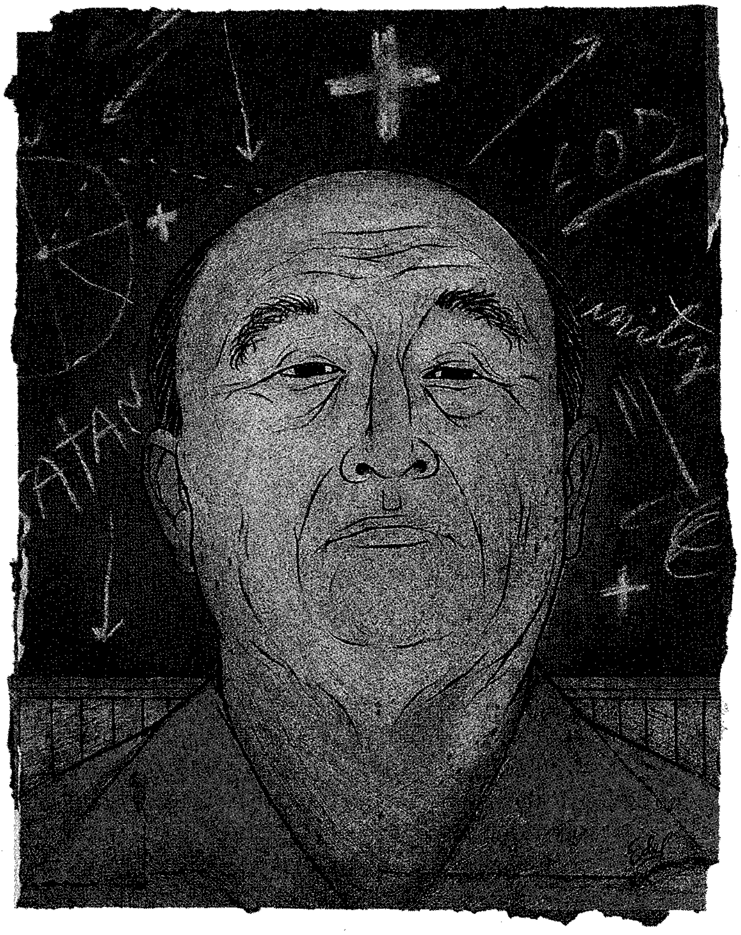
ANNALS OF RELIGION

MOON AT TWILIGHT

Amid scandal, the Unification Church has a strange new mission.

BY PETER MAASS



Moon says that when he was fifteen Jesus appeared to him on a hillside in Korea and asked him to fulfill His mission.

EDEL RODRIGUEZ

A LITTLE before dawn one day last April, a chauffeur-driven Mercedes sedan entered the grounds of an estate in Tarrytown, New York, and stopped in front of a brick carriage house that had been converted into a meeting room. An elderly passenger in a business suit got out of the car and, with his wife a few steps behind him, walked inside, where some hundred and fifty people were singing hymns. The singing stopped when the couple entered and made their way through the room. The worshippers shuffled aside, bowing their heads. Once the man and his wife were seated, everyone bowed again, this time dropping to their knees and touching their foreheads to the floor.

The Reverend Sun Myung Moon, the founder of the Unification Church, had come to deliver a sermon at Belvedere, as the church's Hudson Valley estate is called, and on this Sunday, April 19th, his topics included love, God, Satan, money, Christianity, Adam and Eve, sin, the afterlife, kissing, adultery, America, redemption, and numerology. Moon, who has the leathery complexion of a fisherman, occasionally spoke English, but his accent is heavy and his grammar imperfect. Most of the time, he spoke Korean, and his remarks were translated.

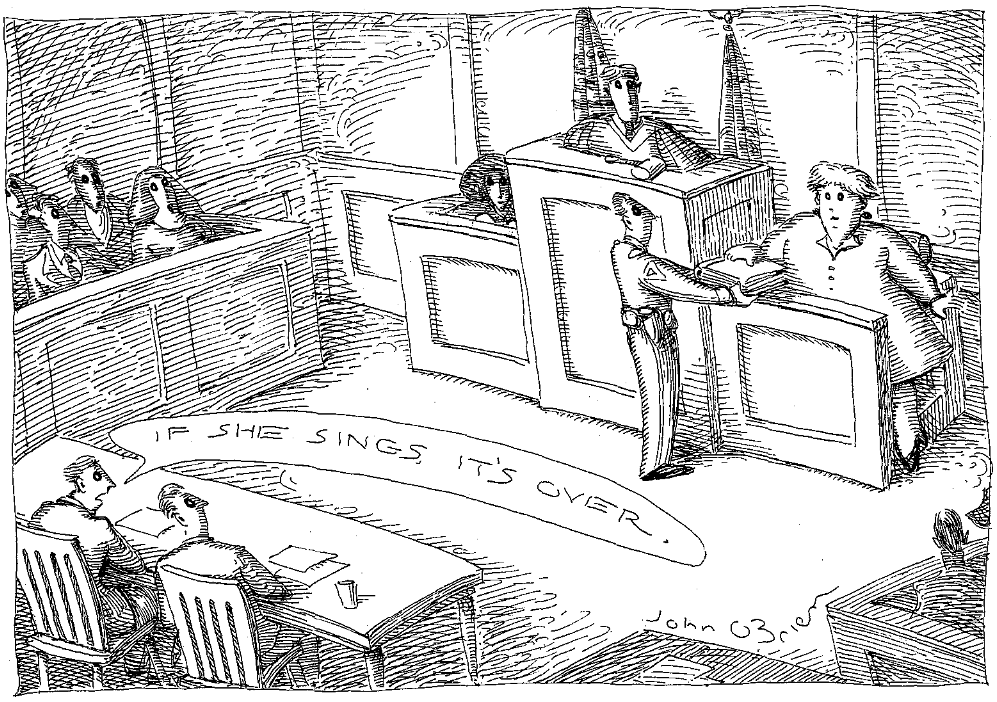
As he moved lightly around the small stage, followed by an interpreter, Moon drew abstract diagrams on a chalkboard—circles and swirls and crosses and graphs, which had the appearance of mathematical formulas intertwined with football plays; occasionally he drew Chinese characters. Several times, he held up someone's hair, to make the point that even the thinnest strands can contain both good and evil. His sermon was punctuated with comic touches, including an interlude in which he chalked a line down his interpreter's forehead, nose, and lips, down his chin and neck, and down his shirt as far as his waist. I heard giggles.

By that time, everyone was sitting cross-legged on the floor—women on the left, men on the right. They had left their shoes in a pile at the door. Because of the early hour and the length of the sermon, there was some fidgeting, some nodding off. Moon noticed this, but the sermon continued. At one point, Moon complained about financial mismanagement by senior aides, and thereafter he harangued them intermittently and threw a glass of cold tea at one of them. He then picked up another glass of tea and looked at his slightly stunned followers. "Anyone want a cold shower?" he asked, winding up as if to throw it. There was a ripple of nervous laughter. "No one understands Father," he concluded, referring to himself by the name his followers use. "Not even Mother and his children."

Many people have had trouble understanding Sun Myung Moon, who came to America in 1971 with a handful of followers, most of them from South Korea and Japan. He soon had greater financial resources than seemed possible for the leader of a small group from a poor Asian nation. Moon's message was clear enough: he warned that if the world became dominated by an atheistic political system, Communism, there would be no hope for religion. Some skeptics, though, came to view him as a puppet for the anti-Communist interests of South Korea's government and Japan's far-right nationalists.

Yet Moon's breakaway theology, which mixes Christianity with anti-Communism and Confucianism, attracted thousands of disciples. It also brought with it considerable controversy. His critics, including some former church members, said that new recruits were discouraged from having contact with the outside world—and especially with family members. The church denied this, as well as charges that Moon was brainwashing followers; many parents hired professional "deprogrammers" to return their wayward sons and daughters from the control of what became known as the Moonies.

Moon also established businesses that make everything from machine


IF SHE SINGS IT'S OVER.
John O'Brien

tools to ginseng extract, although it has never been clear how these ventures produced the amounts that were needed to nourish his movement's cultural and political projects. A conspicuous beneficiary of his largesse is the Washington *Times*, the newspaper that he founded in 1982 to promote a conservative agenda in the nation's capital; the paper has received more than a billion dollars from the Unification movement. (Moon has also started papers in New York, Seoul, Tokyo, and, in 1996, Buenos Aires.) Although a number of editors and staffers left the Washington *Times* amid controversy over church meddling, the paper became, and has remained, an important source of information for the American right.

With the end of the Cold War, Moon's message began to change in substantial ways. Church-linked firms have been investing in Communist nations rather than combatting them. A church firm runs a hotel in Pyongyang, the capital of North Korea; Panda Motors was a costly (and unsuccessful) venture to manufacture cars in southern China. Moon still believes that Satan is battling God for control of the world and must be defeated, but he declares that the main threat no longer comes from Communism but from moral decay.

Today, much of Moon's energy and money is being channelled into the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification, inaugurated by Moon and his wife in 1996, which promotes family values and faith in God. The business cards now handed out by church leaders usually bear the name and logo of the Family Federation, and it was under the auspices of the federation, not the Unification Church, that a mass wedding was staged in June in Madison Square Garden. Moon has strengthened his alliances with a number of conservative religious figures, including Jerry Falwell. (Falwell's Liberty University was saved from bankruptcy after an organization founded by Moon turned over three and a half million dollars to it in 1995.) Moon has also reached out to the Nation of Islam, and its members attend his events; last year, Louis Farrakhan spoke at a mass wedding in Washington, D.C.

This shift toward the federation comes at a time of difficulty for the Unification Church. The church claims that at its peak, in the nineteen-eighties, it had an active membership in America that exceeded thirty thousand, and that the number remains at roughly that level today. Critics say membership never reached ten thousand and has fallen to just a few thousand. Former church insiders have spoken of financial excesses at the heart of the "true family," as Moon's family is called. At least two of the thirteen children Moon had with his current wife (he has a son from an earlier marriage that ended in divorce) reportedly rebelled against him.

The most damaging scandal involves Hyo Jin, Moon's eldest son by his current wife and onetime heir apparent. In 1995, Hyo Jin's wife, Nansook Hong, fled the family compound in Irvington, New York, taking her five children, and subsequently filed for divorce and for a restraining order against Hyo Jin. In affidavits, she outlined a tale of drug use and spousal abuse by Hyo Jin, accusing him of "secreting himself in the master bedroom, sometimes for hours, sometimes for days, drinking alcohol, using cocaine and watching pornographic films." She said he beat her repeatedly, even when she was pregnant. Hyo Jin, through his lawyer, denies Nansook's accusations. Hyo Jin was jailed for a few months after failing to obey a court order to pay sixty-five thousand dollars toward Hong's legal fees.

At the end of 1997, Hyo Jin and Nansook reached a divorce agreement, in which she was granted full custody of their children. Nansook Hong has written a tell-all memoir, "In the Shadow of the Moons," which is being published this month by Little, Brown, and she is scheduled to appear this Sunday on "60 Minutes." Yet despite such problems, Moon, who is seventy-eight, is beginning what may be his most ambitious campaign to eliminate evil from the world.

MOON often travels in his private jet between estates in New York, Alaska, Seoul, and Punta del Este, Uruguay, but his latest venture is unfolding in an expanse of jungle and grassland near Brazil's border with Paraguay. There Moon is building a utopian community called New Hope, which is heralded as the beginning of a modern-day Garden of Eden.

Moon envisions a total of thirty-three communities within a hundred-and-twenty-mile radius of New Hope, and he wants these to inspire similar communities—elsewhere in Brazil, throughout South America, and be-

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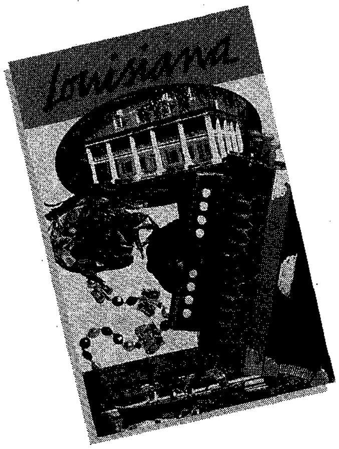

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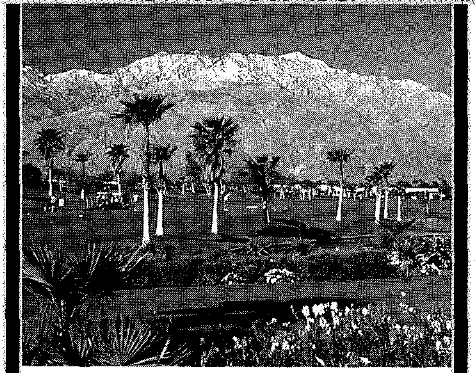

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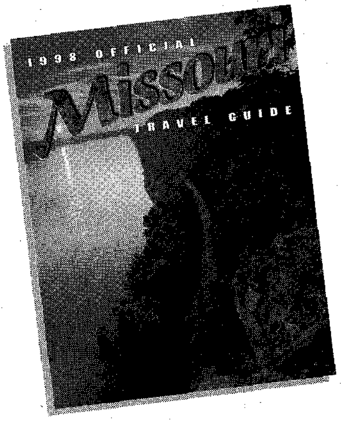

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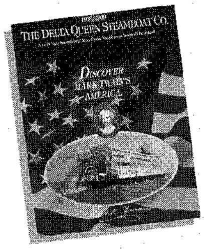

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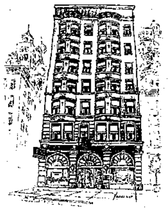

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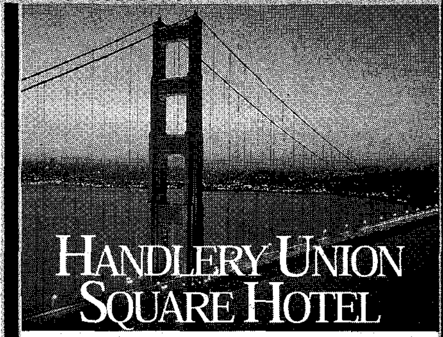

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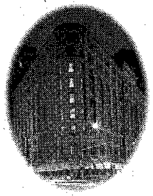

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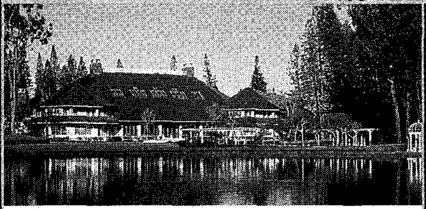

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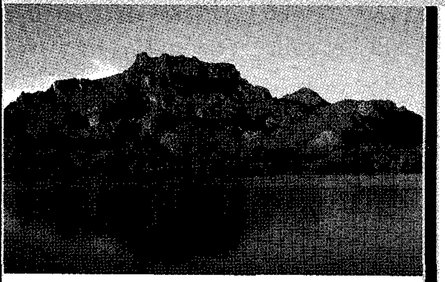

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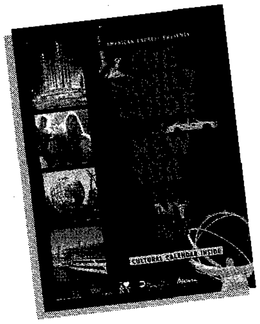

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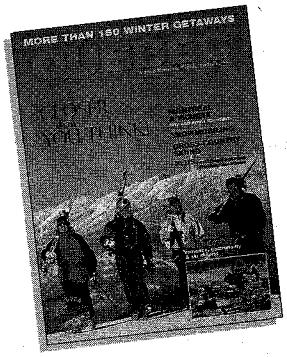

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GREAT ESCAPES

FALL

yond. According to the official Web site (www.new-hope-farm.com.br), "Project New Hope has the ambition of becoming, within 7 or 8 years, an example of progress, beauty and happiness for the whole world." So far, Moon's movement has invested about twenty-five million dollars, according to the project manager, Cesar Zaduski, and has acquired more than eighty-six thousand acres of land.

New Hope is situated outside the town of Jardim, in the Brazilian state of Mato Grosso do Sul, and last spring I went there to see what progress had been made. I arrived by bus from the state capital, Campo Grande, and on a warm evening in May my taxi-driver headed out of town on a two-lane road with no painted lines and no shoulder. There were no houses and no road signs on either side—just the Brazilian hinterland and a succession of cattle eyes in our headlights. Then a sign said "New Hope Farm" and an arrow pointed left, into more darkness. We soon came upon a bridge, and as we reached its crest a row of lights appeared a short distance away.

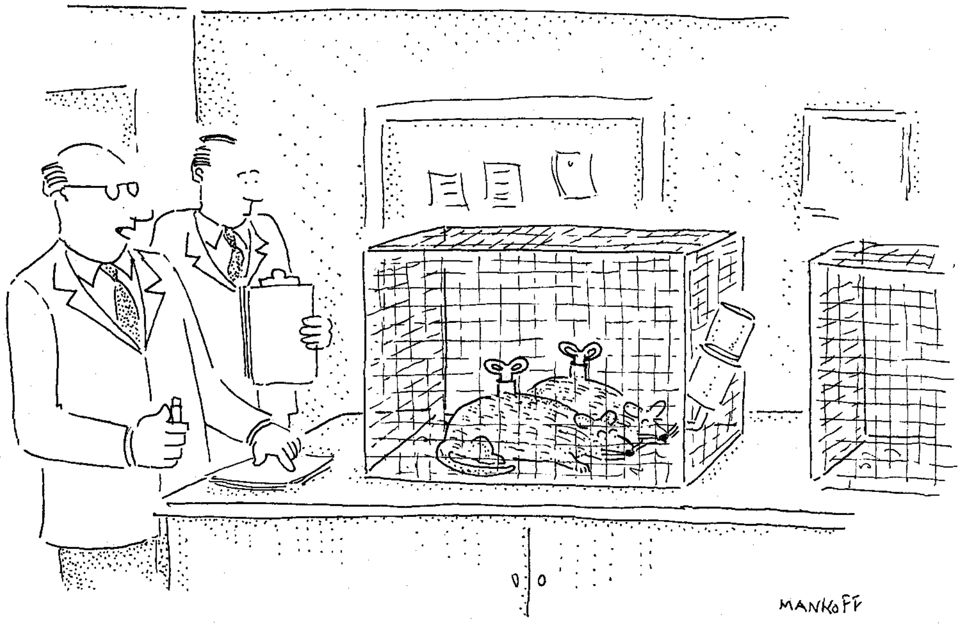
When I was at New Hope, more than a hundred construction workers were on the job, and a dozen bulldozers and tractors were parked in front of several nearly finished buildings, which had the look of a California community college. The complex is dominated by two buildings nearly the size of football fields, with roofs of red tile and walls of white stucco. One of them, crowned with oversized insignias of the Unification Church and the Family Federation, is a meeting hall. The other is the dining hall, but it, too, contains a number of meeting rooms. Not far away is a small lake, and a few hundred yards from that are six structures, in various stages of completion, that are to be classrooms for the some three thousand students who will eventually study there. The first group of students—most of them to be recruited from the area, with only a modest number of church members among them—are supposed to arrive in February.

If all goes as planned, students and researchers at New Hope will be linked via satellite to classrooms across the globe, but particularly to the University of Bridgeport, in Connecticut, which a church-linked organization took effective control of in 1992, in exchange for a loan of sixty million dollars (much to the dismay of some members of the university community, who felt that their impoverished campus had been taken over by a cult). One aim of New Hope, according to Zaduski, a former church pastor, is to focus on ways to encourage environmentally responsible development in the Third World. "What Moon says is that the era of big cities, like São Paulo and Rio, is over," Zaduski told me. Zaduski, who speaks fluent English, conducts himself much like the harried manager of any construction job; he complains about the quality of workers and the need to alter things if the boss—Moon—doesn't approve. "Sometimes we do something and he comes here and . . . we have to change it," he said with a shrug.

During our talk, the door to Zaduski's office was shut to keep out the construction noise. Technicians were fiddling with the compound's phone system, which will have high-speed data links. A Japanese architect was soldering together a model for a three-hundred-foot-tall geodesic dome that he hopes to build. The office had a Samsung computer in one corner and several new phones behind a modular desk. A blueprint of New Hope was propped against a wall, showing university buildings, a soccer field, a convention center, a spacious home for Moon, and much more.

Moon has frequently cited the significance of the number thirty-three, the age Jesus was when He was crucified. Zaduski pointed out that there were thirty-three signers of a Korean declaration of independence in 1919, there were thirty-three "immortals" who led the fight for Uruguayan independence, and there are thirty-three countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Hence, the thirty-three communities planned for the area centered on New Hope. The project's Web site states, "Each city . . . should choose one type of tree, one kind of fish, one kind of bird or animal, one kind of fruit, foodstuff, or flower to produce in a massive concentrated way with coöperation from surrounding farmers, in order to make possible prosperity and development in their area." The region around New Hope is supposed to become a "Micro-World" in which the culture of every member of the United Nations will be displayed in their own areas. Or, as the Web site puts it, "Micro-Germany, micro-Hungary, micro-Italy, etc."

I suggested to Zaduski that the project seems at times like a fusion of "Heart of Darkness" and "Through the Looking-Glass." He smiled. "What he"—Moon—"said is 'If people help me, it will go faster. If they don't help me, it will take longer, but I won't stop.' I believe him, because that's what Reverend Moon is like. If Brazil



"The results are meaningless, but it gets the animal-rights people off our backs."

doesn't like it, we will go to Uruguay. If Uruguay doesn't like it, we will go to Paraguay. If South America doesn't like it, we will go to Africa."

About two dozen church members—from Asia, the Americas, and Eastern Europe—were living at New Hope when I visited, and they were busying themselves with odd jobs related to the construction, accompanied by a menagerie that included parrots and emus. The dorms seemed Spartan—beds were narrow and walls were bare—but there was electricity and running water.

On my first day, a Sunday, a bell pealed at four-thirty in the morning. Church members gathered for a service in the dining hall, which was furnished with a few plastic patio chairs. They faced a photograph of Moon and his wife, and the service began with everyone bowing before the photo. Two talks were given in Portuguese by ranking church members, and then, after another prayer, the service ended. It was six o'clock: the sun was rising over the tree line, and the jungle's million and one creatures began screeching and singing and cawing.

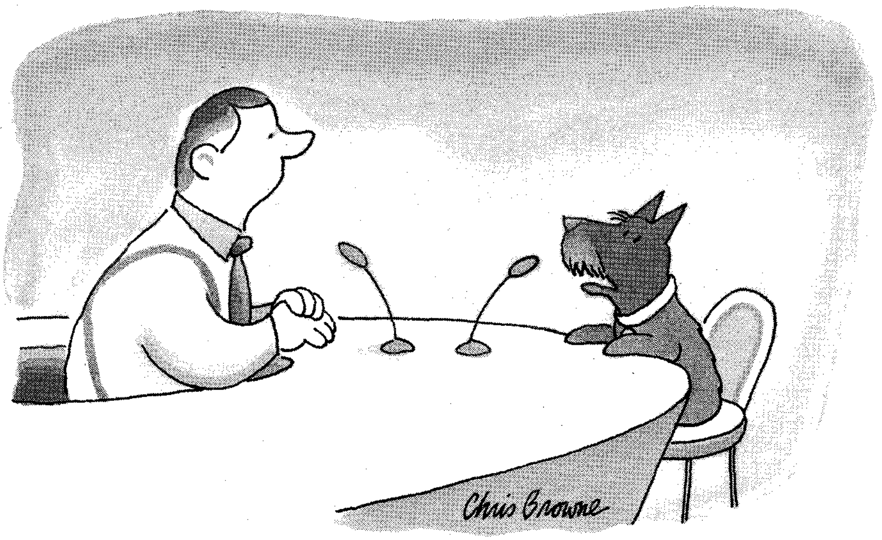
SUN MYUNG MOON was born in a farming village in northwestern Korea, and at the age of fifteen, he says, while he was praying alone on a hillside near his home, Jesus appeared before him and asked him to fulfill His mission. Moon says he refused—twice—but after Jesus asked a third time he consented. According to a sympathetic biograpy by Michael Breen, a journalist and lapsed church member, Moon studied electrical engineering in Seoul and later in Tokyo. When he returned to Seoul, he joined a group called the Israel Jesus Church, which taught that Korea would be the new Israel, where the Second Coming of Christ would occur. In 1946, Moon travelled to Pyongyang to spread the word, but he was arrested and imprisoned by the Communist authorities there for disturbing the social order. Released after a few months, he was arrested again in 1948, and this time he was sentenced to five years of hard labor. He and his fellow-prisoners were apparently freed by their guards in 1950, the first year of the Korean War, after bombing destroyed the labor camp. He thereupon made his way south, and in 1954 he established the Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity, which eventually became known as the Unification Church.

The core of Moon's beliefs, expressed in "Divine Principle," a four-hundred-and-eleven-page book, is that Eve was seduced by Satan in the Garden of Eden and had illicit sexual relations with Adam. This violated God's desire that Adam and Eve await His blessing of their union before becoming intimate and having children. Their offspring were thus tainted by Satan's influence; evil invaded the human spirit. God later sent Jesus to establish a pure family on earth, free of evil, but Jesus was crucified before He could marry and have children. Moon sees the essence of his own mission as completing the one given to Jesus—establishing a "true family" untouched by Satan while teaching all people to lead a God-centered life under his spiritual leadership.

MOON rarely allows outsiders an intimate glimpse of his private life and, apart from a meeting with a group of Soviet journalists in 1989, hasn't granted an interview in two decades. Church members are not supposed to tape-record or take photographs during his sermons, and journalists are generally prohibited from attending. Although I was refused an interview with Moon, earlier this year his aides allowed me to attend his sermons at Belvedere, and also to visit his residential estate, in nearby Irvington. There were many reasons for this, the most important of which seemed to be that I had once lived in South Korea, as a correspondent for the Washington *Post*, and had become acquainted with some church members.

The sermons begin at 5:30 A.M., but church members, dressed in their Sunday finest, arrive earlier, forming a stop-and-go caravan at Belvedere. A guard recognizes members and waves them through, but shines a flashlight on people he doesn't recognize and inspects their I.D.s. At a basement entrance to the carriage house, there is a metal detector, and a guard lightly inspects handbags and briefcases. A narrow, rickety staircase leads to the meeting room, a former garage. It has a piano in a corner and a collection of pictures on the walls: there is a picture of one of the mass weddings (known as "blessings" in church parlance), and another of a 1976 rally at the Washington Monument. The majority of the church members at the sermons are of Asian origin—mostly Korean and Japanese. The garage door at the back of the room is kept open, and latecomers sit outdoors, on folding chairs, and if it happens to rain they stay in place and open umbrellas.

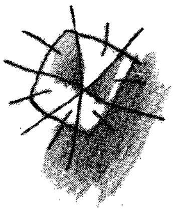
Moon speaks at great length. During one sermon I attended, Moon sensed



"You have to understand. The hand that was feeding me was a total bastard."

• •

restlessness and said to his flock, smiling, “Are you enjoying this? Father’s record for giving sermons is sixteen hours and forty minutes.” Frederick Sontag, a professor of philosophy at Pomona College who interviewed Moon in 1977, had expected something like a half-hour session but ended up talking with Moon for nine hours. “I ran out of questions and he was still sitting there,” Sontag told me.



Moon uses people in the front rows as props. He often talks about the unity of all races, and on occasion he will nudge together the heads of followers who have taken the sought-after front-row places. If he wants to dramatize a point, he may slap the top of someone’s head with his hand or with the back of his eraser. This is made of hard plastic, and the sound of it hitting a head is like that of a bat hitting a baseball.

Moon will on occasion slap the brow of his interpreter, Peter Kim, and this makes a lively sound. Moon may grab Kim’s tie and tug him one way or another, playfully kick his behind, or paw the front of Kim’s jacket, imitating, on one occasion, a baby looking for its mother’s breast. Kim has been Moon’s interpreter for many years, so they are like a team—in their happier moments, a spiritual Abbott and Costello.

There are darker moments, of course, because Moon has a relatively dark view of the state of things. Although Moon moved to America because he saw it as the leading Christian nation of the world, now he sees it as a nation of moral rot.

“Don’t you think Father has loved America?” he said on April 19th.

“Yes,” his followers responded, together.

“More than anyone else?” Moon asked.

“Yes,” the crowd said.

“More than even George Washington?”

“Yes.”

“Who was the first one to love this country?”

“Father.”

“Between George Washington and True Parents, who is in a higher position?”

“True Parents.”

Little seems to shock Moon’s followers—not even his unorthodox discourses about sex and anatomy. One of the unusual aspects of his sermons is that, although he talks relentlessly about the evils of “free sex”—that is, premarital sex, adultery, and homosexuality—he engages in intimate discussions of sexual activity, and he makes it clear that a fulfilling sex life within marriage makes God happy.

“Can we say that the waste of a holy man is holy waste?” he asked during a sermon on May 1st. “Can we say that the anus of a holy man is a holy anus?”

Nobody in the audience was quite sure what to say, so Moon continued: “On the human body we have many orifices, but which orifice does the baby come through, the most special one?”

“Sexual organ,” a few people replied, tentatively.

“But doesn’t urine also come out of there? Why? It’s like that with a seed. You bury it under smelly topsoil. You understand?”

“Yes.”

Moon noted that a man’s penis—“love organ” was the term used by Peter Kim, looking a bit uneasy—goes into the same “hole” that urine flows through.

“Think about it,” Moon said. “Do you think that hole is a dirty hole or holy hole?”

“Holy hole,” someone ventured.

“Holy hole!” Moon bubbled in English. “Holy hole! Holy hole! Make sound!”

“Holy hole!” the crowd repeated.

To some extent, they are humoring the old man—or, at least, responding as they think he wants them to respond. At his Easter sermon, Moon talked about his hopes for converting krill, which whales feed on, into food for human beings. He heard a few giggles in the room.

“This all looks impractical, but it is practical,” he said. “As a religious leader, Father was expected to behave in a certain way, but Father never behaved in that way. He became active in politics and economics. Father had to do it. Now Father is thinking of space. Father is thinking of Olympics not only on land but in space.”

There were more giggles, but when the crowd noticed Moon’s less than pleased expression, applause broke out.

“Do you think this is a dream, or will it be achieved?” he asked.

“Achieved!” the crowd roared.

“Whatever Father says, do you believe and want?”

“Yes!”

AFTER the April 19th sermon, Tyler Hendricks, who is the president of the American branch of the Unification Church, suggested that he and I go up the road to Irvington and visit Moon’s residential estate, East Garden. The compound, which has a splendid view of the Hudson River, is gated, monitored by security cameras, and patrolled by a private security force. At the front gate, there is a brick guardhouse; from there, a steep, winding driveway, about a quarter mile long, leads to three houses. One is an old mansion with twelve bedrooms. Moon’s children and grandchildren live there and in a recently built Tudor-style house. Moon lives in a three-story house that looks like an immense, attractively designed bunker. A church insider acknowledged that it cost more than ten million dollars to build.

Hendricks and I took off our shoes and went inside. The ground floor includes a banquet hall, a restaurant-size kitchen, and a dining room with a wall-to-wall skylight. The dining table is bordered on two sides by a pond filled with carp. A rock garden, watered by an overhead sprinkler system, slopes down toward the pond, which is fed by a waterfall. It is like dining in a rain forest.

Moon was upstairs in his living room, but his advisers were in the dining room, having a lunch of bibimbap, a Korean dish of rice, vegetables, and meat. Bowls of kimchi, a spicy cabbage appetizer, were placed on the table. Hendricks and I sat down and joined the others, using silver chopsticks that had been laid out for us. There was intermittent conversation; it had been a long morning for Moon’s brain trust. Peter Kim rubbed his lower back and grimaced, making it clear that interpreting for five hours is a hard job, especially when the person you are translating for tends to slap your forehead and draw on your face.

The path to Moon himself leads through an inner circle of perhaps half a dozen Koreans, including Bo Hi Pak, a former colonel in South Korea’s Army, and Dong Moon Joo, the president of the Washington *Times*. This circle is joined, in part, by a network of arranged marriages. For example, Bo Hi Pak's son Jin Sung is married to one of Moon's daughters, and Bo Hi Pak's daughter Julia was engaged to Heung Jin, a son of Moon's, who died in a car crash. A marriage ceremony was held after Heung Jin's death, and Julia, considered one of Moon's daughters-in-law, adopted a child born to one of Moon's other sons. She is the leading ballerina in the Seoul-based Universal Ballet, which is sponsored by Moon.

Bo Hi Pak came to America as an attaché in the South Korean Embassy, and later became Moon's point man in America. In 1978, while the church was under investigation as part of a congressional probe into the influence-peddling scandal known as Koreagate, Pak used the occasion of a Capitol Hill hearing to accuse the subcommittee chairman, Representative Donald Fraser, of being "an instrument of the Devil." The committee's report, released late that year, accused Moon of trying to establish "a worldwide government in which the separation of church and state would be abolished and which would be governed by Moon and his followers." In 1981, Moon was indicted by a federal grand jury for tax evasion; he was convicted in 1982 and later incarcerated at the federal penitentiary in Danbury, Connecticut, for just under a year.

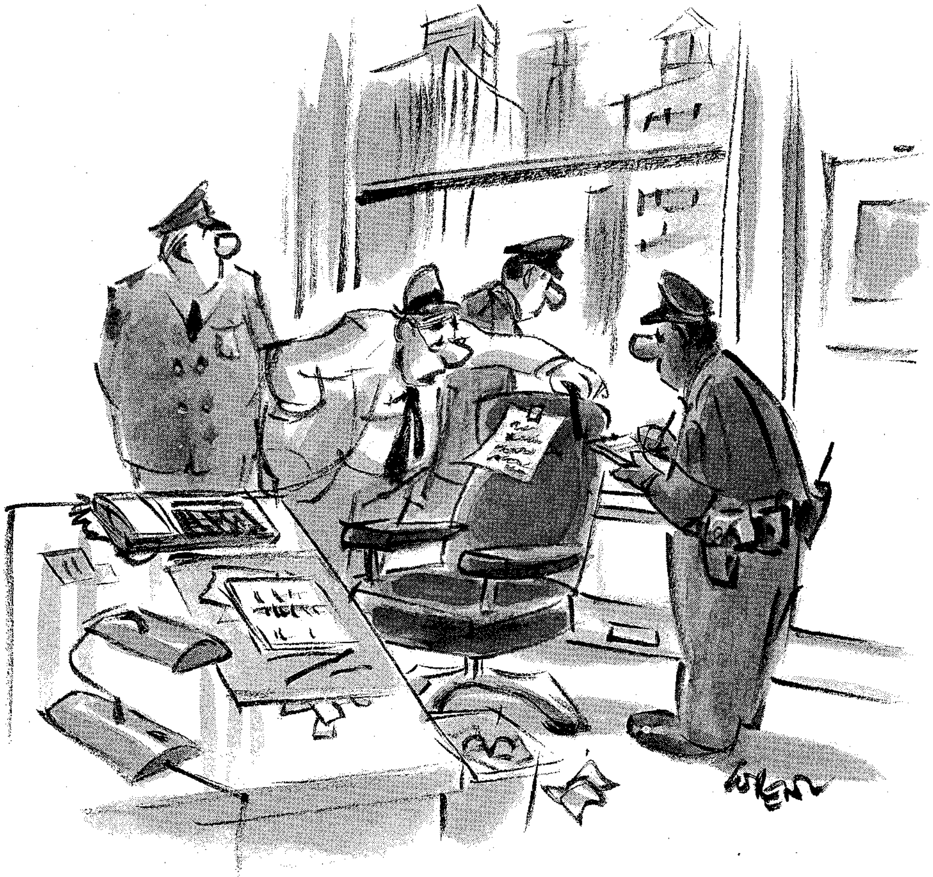
Late last year, over lunch in Washington, Pak told me about a visit to Moscow in 1990, and how Moon had declared that they would meet the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. "I was astounded," Pak said. "I was the man trying to make arrangements!" But the meeting took place, helped, no doubt, by the prospect of investments from firms under Moon's control. Pak was at Moon's side as they drove away from the Kremlin, and he recalled, "He said to me, 'I'm going to meet Kim Il Sung.' I said '*Who*?'" A year later, Moon did meet the North Korean leader. I asked Pak what he thought of Moon. "He's an enigma," Pak said. "Even after forty years, I can't pinpoint who he is."

Moon gets harder to pinpoint because his mission keeps changing—right now it's a campaign, under the aegis of the Family Federation, to "bless" millions of couples. Moon's followers around the world have been collecting signatures on an innocuous pro-family pledge in which couples affirm their fidelity to each other and their faith in God. Church officials say that a hundred and twenty million couples have already received their blessing, although that figure seems unlikely.

The campaign has dismayed some church members, because a blessing from Moon used to be a hard-won privilege, typically attained only after a person had joined the church, worked in it for several years, and agreed to marry someone—usually a stranger—selected by Moon. But grumblings about the blessing campaign are just the beginning of Moon's current troubles. Instead of being damaged by various traditional foes—Communists, Catholics, deprogrammers, the I.R.S.—Moon is being hurt, perhaps fatally, by problems in his own family.

The affidavits by Moon's former daughter-in-law, Nansook Hong, brought into view another damaging claim that had never been made by a family member: that corrupting amounts of cash accumulated around the upper echelons of the Moon family. "On one occasion, I saw Hyo Jin bring home a box about 24 inches wide, twelve inches tall and six inches deep," she said in one affidavit. "He stated that he had received it from his father. He opened it and showed me its contents. It was filled with $100 bills stacked in bunches of $10,000 each for a total of $1,000,000 *in cash!*" She added that he had given six hundred thousand dollars to the Manhattan Center Studios, a recording facility he ran for the church, and had kept four hundred thousand dollars right in their room—petty cash for his own use. A church spokesman has said that her allegations about the misuse of church funds are untrue.

WHAT draws people to a man who seems distinctly uncharismatic and speaks a language that most of his American followers don't understand? David Bromley, a professor of sociology and religious studies at Virginia Commonwealth University, who has co-written a book about the Unification Church, believes that the bulk of Moon's remaining followers were recruited in the seventies, when both the establishment and the counterculture were falling apart. Bromley says that the sense of joining a close, purposeful community was crucial, and that it is



"Looks like broker-assisted suicide."

no coincidence that church members refer to each other as "brother" and "sister" or that Moon is called Father.

One evening in late spring, I was driving from Manhattan to Moon's East Garden estate with several church members. I asked Betty Lancaster, one of the first Americans to join the Unification Church, how she had managed to stay with Moon for so long, given that he seemed to have achieved so little and was so isolated, with only a handful of followers. She mentioned the story of Noah, and said that Noah was mocked while building his ark and probably felt a bit lonely.

But what of Moon's peculiarities—his bizarre ideas, such as building a highway around the world? (He has had brochures drawn up and routes outlined.) His loyalists say he tests their faith, just as God tested that of the Israelites in the Old Testament. Why, they ask, cannot the messiah be as temperamental and unpredictable as God? "Often, he says his life style doesn't follow human logic or human thinking," said Christian Lepelletier, a longtime church member, who is from France. "He is connected to God."

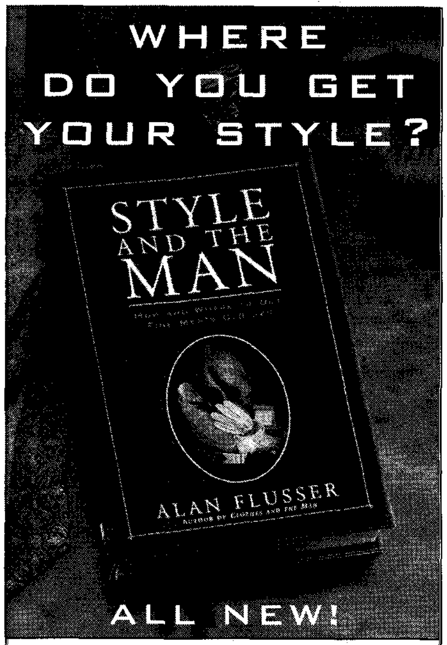
There are, certainly, differing degrees of devotion among Moon's followers; the fact that they bow at the right moment or shout *"Mansei!"* in unison doesn't mean they believe everything Moon says, or do precisely what he commands. Even on important issues, like Moon's claiming to be the messiah, there are church members whom I met, including a close aide to Moon, who demur. A religious leader whom they respect and whose theology they believe, yes; the messiah, perhaps not.

Although some critics view Moon's movement as a continuing menace, a mellowing of sorts is under way, according to Larry Moffitt, a prominent American member. Moffit joined the church in 1974 and later married a Japanese woman chosen for him by Moon. The couple have five children and live in Buenos Aires, where Moffitt is an associate publisher of *Tiempos del Mundo*, a church-linked newspaper based in Buenos Aires and available in sixteen countries. Although Moon often predicts in his sermons that a breakthrough is near, Moffitt realizes that Moon may not come to be seen as the messiah in his lifetime. "You can't look at it in a ten-year frame," he said. "A new religion is a six-hundred-year start-up. Look at all the major faiths. It required four hundred years for Christianity to take over Rome." That wasn't the attitude two decades ago, or even a decade ago, when there was a greater sense of urgency in the church—a sense that victory was just around the corner.

ON a windy day in April, with the accord of Moon's advisers, I went to a marina near his estate and waited there with a dozen of his followers. At eight-thirty in the morning, he pulled up in a chauffeured sports utility vehicle. He was dressed casually, in green slacks and a baseball cap. He walked to the dock, and, after receiving quick bows from his followers, he boarded his fishing boat. His gear was already laid out on the craft, including a tackle box with the words "True Father's" imprinted on it.

Three boats headed out with Moon's, and I was on one of them, along with Tyler Hendricks and Takeru Kamiyama, who had been imprisoned with Moon at Danbury in the eighties. The weather was miserable: a strong wind kicked up choppy waves, and water splashed over the gunwales. Moon sat at the stern, watching his rods, which were held in place by brackets. He rarely spoke, and when he reeled in a line, an aide quickly handed him another rod, with fresh bait on its hook. Moon then cast the line into the Hudson, stuck the pole into a bracket, and waited.

The striped bass were not biting; the waters were too turbulent. But Moon stayed on the Hudson. At irregular intervals an order would come over the ship-to-ship radio, and suddenly we would speed off in a new direction, chasing after Moon's boat. "We go! We go!" the Japanese pilot of my boat yelled, half in exultation, half in fear that we might lose Moon. The pilot had no idea where we were headed; we just followed Moon's boat for miles up and down the Hudson. This went on for nine chilly hours. Moon has told followers that he meditates while he is fishing, and that his goal is not to catch fish but to get closer to God and, on days like this, pay "indemnity" for the sins of humankind. If the weather is foul and the fish aren't biting, it's because God wants it that way. ♦



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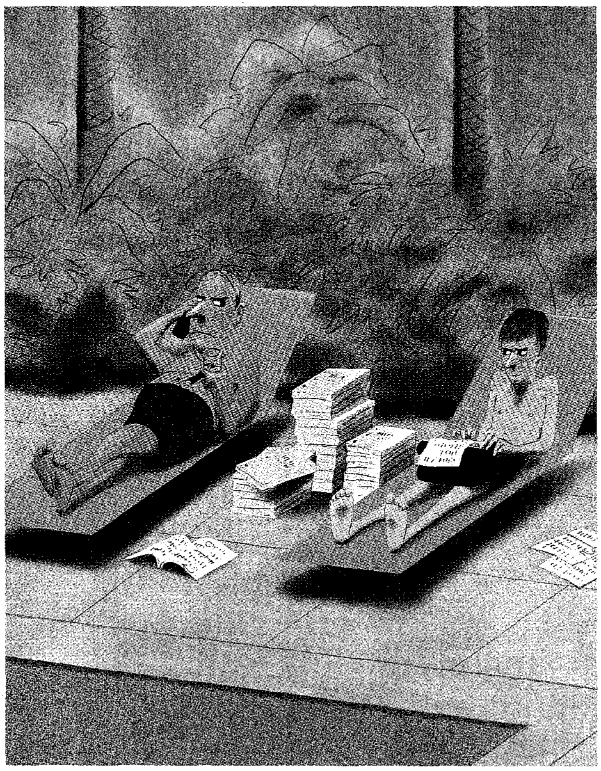
POSTCARD FROM HOLLYWOOD

COPY CATS

Studios are awash in copyright suits.
Why are they so hard to win?

BY TAD FRIEND

THIS summer, Americans spent five hundred and seventy-five million hours in darkened cinemas and saw, at most, two new things: the harrowing D Day sequence in "Saving Private Ryan" and the hair-gel joke in "There's Something About Mary." Yet as popcorn movies have become a tag-team-written jumble of curvy scientists, ninja studs, morphing cyborgs, and basement-loving psychos, one obscure writer after another has come forward to advance the claim that a studio stole his brainchild. Hollywood movies may never have seemed more derivative, but the copyright suits they inspire display an ingenuity and a nuanced concern for story development worthy of the young Orson Welles.


What if Shakespeare sued the producers of "West Side Story" for copyright infringement? He'd probably lose.

IAN FALCONER

Our sympathies in these cases tend to go to the little guy—to plaintiffs like Mark Dunn, a soft-spoken clerk at the New York Public Library, who is suing Paramount Studios, the producer Scott Rudin, and the screenwriter Andrew Niccol for three hundred million dollars. Dunn alleges that his play "Frank's Life," about the unwitting subject of a TV series, was secretly used as a blueprint by the creators of "The Truman Show" after they had rejected it as a potential movie. Dunn has earned less than twenty-five thousand dollars from his many years of writing for what he calls the "Off-Off-Broadway ghetto"; "The Truman Show" has grossed a hundred and twenty-five million dollars to date.

Dunn's suit lists a hundred and forty-nine purported similarities between "Frank's Life" and "The Truman Show." That seems an overwhelming number, and Dunn's lawyer, Carl Person, says that the two works' resemblances make the suit "the best copyright case I've ever had." This is not saying much, however, for Person hasn't yet won any of the five movie-copyright cases he's filed. He probably won't win this one, either—and maybe he shouldn't.

Paramount will undoubtedly argue that Andrew Niccol came up with the idea for "The Truman Show" independently (Niccol's former manager says that he has the writer's copyrighted treatment, written in 1991, a year before "Frank's Life" was staged) and that Person's client is either deluded or a stickup artist, or both. In June, Lynn Pleshette, Niccol's agent, patiently explained to the New York *Post*, "Every time a big movie comes out a moron tries to sue." Though plaintiffs like Dunn ra-

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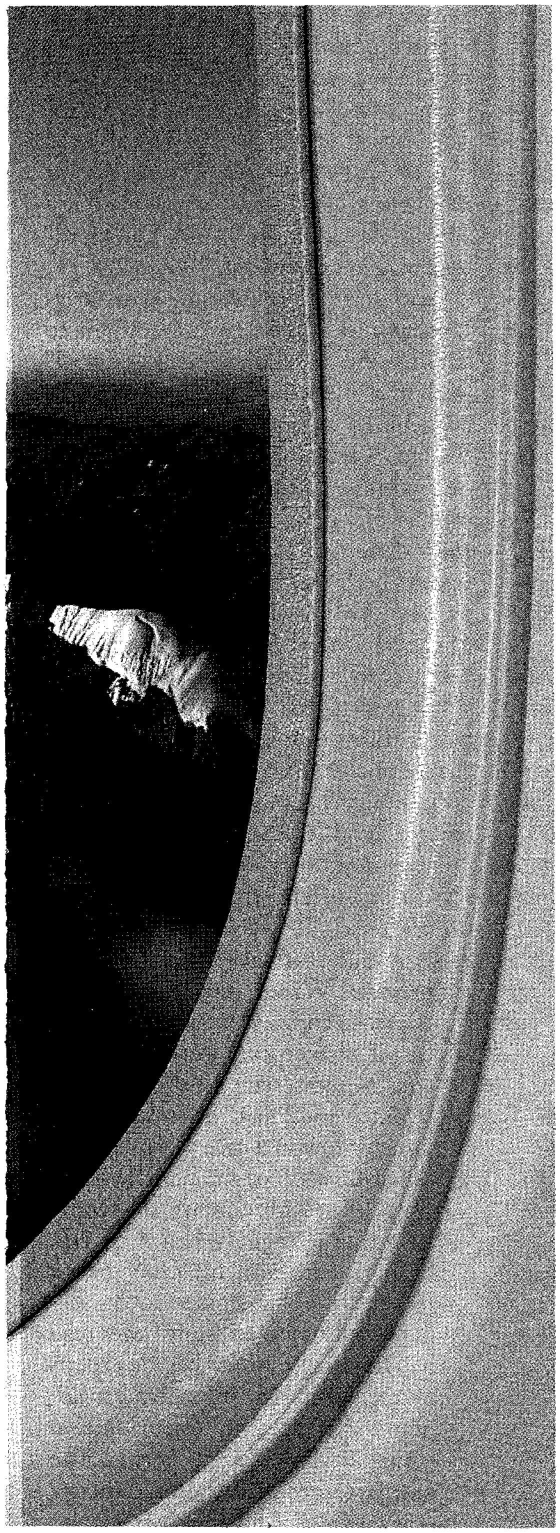
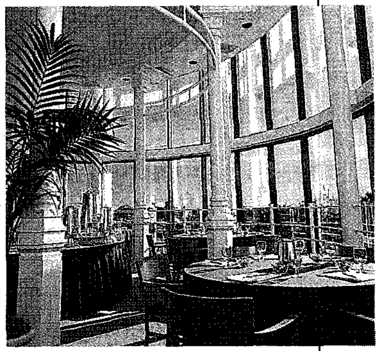


The more you travel, the easier it is to forget that a flight can be a breathtaking experience, not merely a means of reaching your destination.



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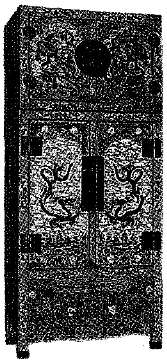

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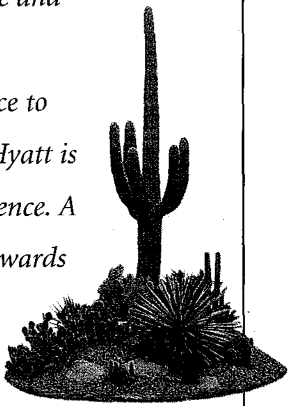

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diate aggrieved sincerity, Paul Rudnick, the writer of "Sister Act"—which also fought off a Carl Person lawsuit—notes dryly that "the prospect of eight figures inspires a lot of sincerity." Furthermore, as any cost-conscious producer will tell you, it's usually much less expensive for a studio to buy a property than to steal it.

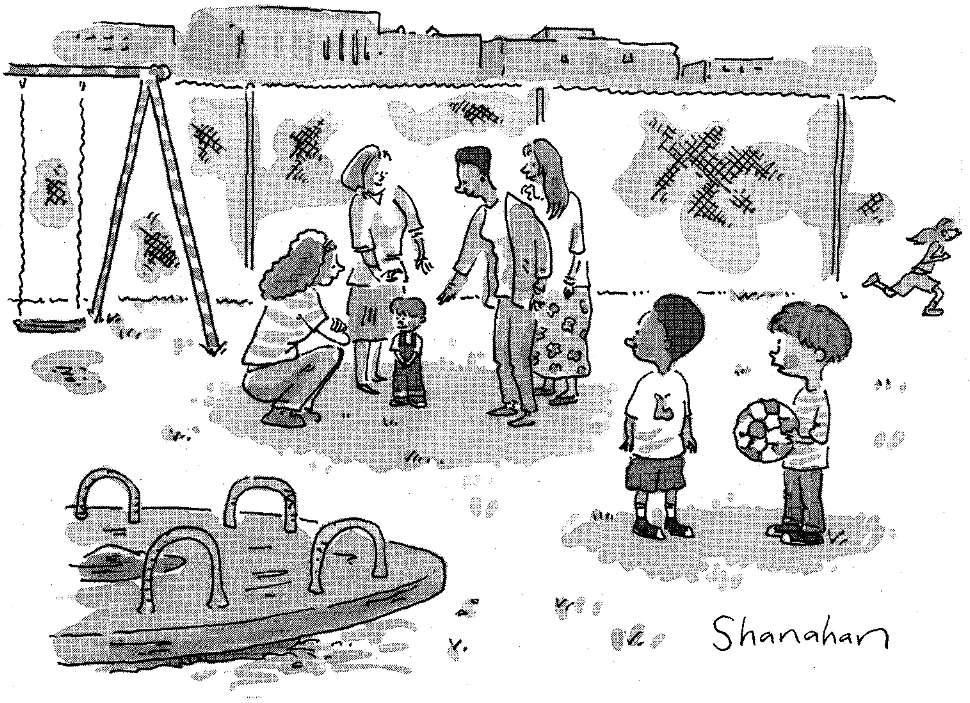
But the reason that Dunn and Person will probably lose their suit has less to do with the perceived integrity of the plaintiffs and the ostensible skullduggery of the defendants than with the fact that most copyright plaintiffs overestimate how much protection they have under the law. Even more important, they misunderstand how the Hollywood blockbuster gets created. Studios generally don't *want* to make something so original that they'd have to steal it from an unsung genius; they want to recast familiar stories and have them endlessly rewritten until every star feels his part is juicy enough. Movies are often sold to the studios in the first place as the genetically predictable offspring of two prior hits ("It's 'Working Girl' meets 'Marathon Man'!"). Many studios believe that if something is totally new—"Koyaanisqatsi," say—we won't want to see it.

In copyright law, it's the details that matter. The idea of Tom Cruise playing an idealistic recent Harvard Law School graduate who gets pulled into a sinister case that's way over his head sounds copyrightable—and ridiculously commercial—but it describes equally well two very different films that came out only months apart: "The Firm" and "A Few Good Men." That example explains why under federal law ideas—and most characters—can't be copyrighted.

Sixty-eight years ago, in the landmark case Nichols v. Universal Pictures Corporation, Judge Learned Hand determined that the author of "Abie's Irish Rose," a generic play about Irish-Jewish intermarriage, had no claim against "The Cohens and the Kellys," a generic movie about Irish-Jewish intermarriage. Calling the Irish father in the play "a mere symbol for religious fanaticism and patriarchal pride, scarcely a character at all," and the Irish father in the movie "only a grotesque hobbledehoy, used for low comedy of the most conventional sort," Hand testily declared that neither story deserved legal protection. "The less developed the characters," he wrote, "the less they can be copyrighted; that is the penalty an author must bear for marking them too indistinctly." Thus, you couldn't copyright a wrinkly but adorable creature, or the idea of his being hunted by narrow-minded humans—which explains why the producers of "E.T." were able to fend off three copyright claims from people with prior scripts about wrinkly but adorable creatures, etc.

In theory, you can't copyright mere ideas because the government wishes to encourage free expression—to prevent pioneering writers such as Washington Irving and Nathaniel Hawthorne from locking up all the good American stories. In practice, the law insures that studios aren't stymied by the success of "Die Hard" but can illuminate vast new regions of the human soul in "Die Hard" on a bus ("Speed"), "Die Hard" on a plane ("Air Force One"), "Die Hard" on a mountain ("Cliffhanger"), "Die Hard" on a boat ("Under Siege"), and "Die Hard" on a bigger, slower boat ("Speed 2").

You don't even have to go as far as to change a milieu from Vietnam to an L.A. office building (as "Die Hard" itself did with the "Rambo" story) to be deemed a "creator" in the eyes of the law. Small changes suffice. Indeed, one could argue that the very definition of creativity in Hollywood is the subtle but legally distinguishing tweak. In 1994, Curt Wilson and his partner, Donna Douglas, sued Walt Disney Pictures because "Sister Act" resembled a script they had earlier submitted to the studio: both stories were about a woman hiding from the Mob by disguising herself as a nun, though Disney's movie was much more playful. To the plaintiffs' amazement—they'd spurned a million-dollar settlement offer—the jury found for the defense. "They would have had to copy our stuff *verbatim* for us to prevail," Wilson says disgustedly.



"He's a real mom magnet."

Most copyright lawyers believe that if Shakespeare were alive today and had preserved his copyright on "Romeo and Juliet" he would find it difficult to win a case against "West Side Story." Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim would testify that they'd vaguely heard of Mr. Shakespeare and his Italy-based twist on the star-crossed-lovers scenario, but they'd certainly never read it. The defense would parade experts to testify that Mr. Shakespeare's melodrama was utterly different, since it contained few, if any, Puerto Rican seamstresses and ballet-dancing street gangs. And they would also make the legally weighty argument that because Mr. Shakespeare had himself, as usual, stolen his plot—in this case, from Arthur Brooke's tedious epic poem "The Tragicall Historye of Romeus and Juliet"—

he had no basis for a lawsuit. The legal term for his predicament is "unclean hands," an evocative but uncopyrightable metaphor that was borrowed, one likes to imagine, from Shakespeare's own Lady Macbeth.

THE copyright plaintiffs' legal steeplechase begins with an attempt to show that the studio had the opportunity to borrow from their work. This is the one hurdle plaintiffs can usually clear. If they have written a play or a book, then someone connected with the movie could easily have read it. "Or they submit the script to C.A.A., looking for an agent," the Creative Artists Agency executive Robert Bookman says wearily. "The agent never sees it, the reader is the lowest person on the totem pole, it's a pass, the agent looks at the last page of the coverage, sees 'pass,' and his assistant writes a nice note. Then these plaintiffs say, 'We sent it to C.A.A. *That's* how Michael Crichton'"—a C.A.A. client—"'got the script.'"

But after proving "access" the plaintiffs must demonstrate that the two works are "substantially similar." This entails stacking up "articulable similarities between the plot, themes, dialogue, mood, setting, pace, characters, and sequence" of the two works. In addition to this "objective" test, the court also applies the "subjective" test: whether a layman would perceive a substantial similarity in the works' "total concept and feel."

Mark Dunn's list of a hundred and forty-nine similarities between his play "Frank's Life" and "The Truman Show" includes the pervasive ("Hidden cameras placed all over the sprawling set and unknown to Frank/Truman"; "Frank/Truman were having what appears to the TV audience to be a normal sex life with the actor wives, raising various unspoken moral issues"), the picayune ("A specific volcanic island, within a group of such islands or archipelago, in the southern Pacific Ocean, with double-sounding name (Pago Pago/Fiji) is used as remote place . . . to escape from the effects of the Show"), and the perplexing ("The genre of Frank/Truman is a comedy, but with a uniqueness which is difficult to otherwise categorize").

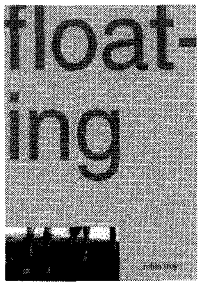
The courts have held, however, that such lists are "inherently subjective and unreliable," particularly where "the list emphasizes random similarities scattered throughout the works." Louis Petrich, a copyright-defense lawyer, says, "You can tell that the plaintiffs are stretching if their lists abstract or trivialize. In the first case, they say, 'When the boy falls into the pit, that's like our scene of the man being chased by the bull, because in both there's "jeopardy."' And in the second case, they say, 'Each story has a red Chevy.' Sure, but what does the Chevy have to do with the story?"

The highest hurdle that plaintiffs face is the fact that most scripts contain a lot of boilerplate that has no particular "author"; it consists of segments that are known legally as *scenes à faire*. As the court defined them in Alexander v. Haley, a 1978 copyright case against "Roots," *scenes à faire* are "incidents, characters or settings which are as a practical matter indispensable, or at least standard, in the treatment of a given topic." Thus the court suggested that when one is writing about slavery one would almost perforce include, among other things, "attempted escapes, flights through the woods pursued by baying dogs, the sorrowful or happy singing of slaves." Another court held that a realistic portrait of cops in the South Bronx would necessarily contain "drunks, prostitutes, vermin and derelict cars."

The notion of *scenes à faire* is capacious enough to include the manner in which a reasonable person might develop an idea even if another reasonable person had earlier developed the same idea in the same way. For instance, if dinosaurs were reanimated, they'd obviously have to be kept far away from the nearest nursery school. So a writer who claimed that he had banished his velociraptors to a remote island before Michael Crichton did the same in "Jurassic Park" got nowhere in court: the judge ruled that "placing dinosaurs on a prehistoric island far from the mainland amounts to no more than a *scene à faire* in a dinosaur adventure story."

The well-known Hollywood lawyer Bert Fields, who is defending Fox Searchlight Pictures in a copyright suit

winner of the mtv fiction contest



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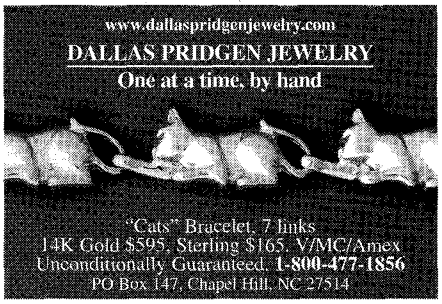

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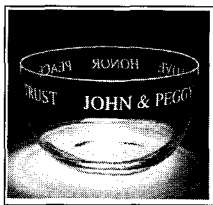

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against "The Full Monty," breezily explains the film's similarities to a play called "Ladies Night" by offering a similar argument. "Once you've got the idea of male strippers," he says, "it's all *scenes à faire:* the inevitable scene when they first put on a G-string, the inevitable scene when someone's naked body is shown as rather unattractive. You've got to have a problem for each of the six guys, so one guy having impotence just goes with the territory." (A judge dismissed the suit on a technicality; the plaintiffs are appealing.)

A further obstacle for plaintiffs is that courts have tended to rule that "copying deleted or so disguised as to be unrecognizable" is not, legally, copying, and therefore that early drafts of a movie's screenplay—even drafts that show evidence of copying—are not legally relevant. Martin Garbus, a copyright lawyer and First Amendment expert who has often sued the studios, says ruefully that people in Hollywood "know to change a description of Lincoln just enough—to put 'black hat' at the end of the sentence and 'legs like a grasshopper' at the beginning, and then take two other sentences from somewhere else. These are very sophisticated people."

Plaintiffs have an especially hard time when there's no paper trail. While aspiring screenwriters dream of a chance collision with a moviemaker (a screenplay was recently handed to Emma Thompson as she was being slid into an M.R.I. tube), nothing could be worse from a plaintiff's point of view. If a producer is stuck on a ski lift with a writer who regales her with his nifty twist on the asteroid-hurtling-toward-earth plot, and she steals it, that's just too bad for him. He can try suing on the ground that there was a tacit mutual assumption that promising material would be paid for—the theory of "implied contract." But unless the writer is already known as a high-concept guy, someone whose very laundry list or drunken E-mails might contain the germ of a billion-dollar idea, this imaginative legal strategy rarely works. Bert Fields says, "If I'm talking to Tom Clancy, there is probably an implied contract. If I'm talking to my dentist"—who had pitched Fields an idea the day before—"probably not."

After contemplating all these barriers, many potential plaintiffs decide not to sue, simply because they lack the necessary funds. Martin Garbus told me, "The people who file these suits can't afford the two hundred and fifty thousand to five hundred thousand dollars to mount a fight against the studios and their big insurance companies. The studios' theory is that if you spend the money and fight, you'll wear your opponents down and discourage others from suing. It's a successful tactic."

Not always. In 1980, the prolific fantasy writer Harlan Ellison won three hundred and thirty-seven thousand dollars from ABC and Paramount, which had shanghaied his idea for a TV series about a robot cop. He then spent seven thousand dollars of his booty to rent a billboard across the street from Paramount Pictures, which read, "Writers, don't let them steal from you! Keep their hands out of your pockets!" "I did it to piss the shit out of them," Ellison says, "and to send the message that writers can't be ripped off."

The studios aren't as invulnerable as they appear. Bert Fields, who has represented them in dozens of copyright cases, told me, "People have learned that the studios often settle if it's cheaper than the cost of litigation"—and that cost shoots up six hundred and fifty dollars an hour when Fields gets involved. "Studios will throw out five thousand dollars if it's a weak case, and two hundred thousand dollars, three hundred thousand dollars for a substantial case. Sometimes much more." Last year, Barbara Chase-Riboud sued Steven Spielberg for "brazenly stealing" from her novel "Echo of Lions" to create his film "Amistad." Then she suddenly dropped her suit, and declared, " 'Amistad' is a splendid piece of work, and I applaud Mr. Spielberg for having the courage to make it." One can't help but hear in such public reversals the ka-ching! of the cash register in the background.

Yet many plaintiffs, it seems, don't want hush money as much as they want recognition. Last January, after a jury rejected the writer Stephen Kessler's plagiarism claim against Michael Crichton for "Twister," there was a curious moment when Kessler tried to shake Crichton's hand (Crichton refused). The copyright-defense lawyer Louis Petrich says, "The plaintiffs don't see themselves as calling the defendants thieves and jeopardizing their careers. They think that now they're in show business, one of the big guys." Certainly Mark Dunn is an unabashed fan of his opponents' work. Dunn owns an early-draft "Truman" screenplay, but says, "I feel guilty even looking at it," because it was smuggled to him without the producers' knowledge. This is a touching amount of reverence for a script that Dunn believes is premised on his own play. "Hollywood inspires yearning and delusion," Paul Rudnick observes, "and this sort of litigation is really a kind of affection and fanship—a foothold."

THE giddiest aspect of copyright suits is how often the studios try to prove that their story was so derivative that they couldn't have stolen it from any one source. Thus, while some reviewers acclaimed "The Truman Show" as a bold departure, Paramount may well point out at the trial that it wasn't. At least seven previous works featured unwitting subjects on camera, including the sixties TV show "The Prisoner," three "Twilight Zone" episodes, and a short Paul Bartel film, "Secret Cinema." When millions of Americans are watching television, it will inevitably occur to more than one of those watchers that television may be also watching them. Ideas occur unpredictably, in odd, fractal clusters. A butterfly flaps its wings over China, and suddenly everyone decides that the next big thing is a mad bomber, an erupting volcano, or a nostalgic look at disco.

You might think that mankind's collective imagination could churn up dozens of fictional ways to track a tornado, but there seems to be only one. When Stephen Kessler sued Michael Crichton for "Twister," he was upset because his script about tornado chasers, "Catch the Wind," had placed a data-collection device called Toto II in the whirlwind's path, just like "Twister" 's data-collecting Dorothy. Not such a coincidence, the defense pointed out: years earlier two other writers had written a script called "Twister" involving a device called Toto, and all the Oz puns had originated with a device used by real tornado chasers which is called, um, Toto.

In the "Sister Act" trial, the producer, Scott Rudin, testified that the credited writer Paul Rudnick's idea was not really novel, and Rudnick acknowledges that "the idea of a nun, or someone in disguise, has been used many, many times before." He continues, "Plus, after my script had been rewritten by half of Southern California, I'd used a pseudonym on the film, so being sued for authorship under those circumstances was sort of hilarious." Still, Rudnick stresses the gulf between an idea and its expression: "Yes, they also had a nun," he says. "But a nun is not a story or a character. A nun is a noun."

And once you have a nun, certain scenes and associations necessarily follow. The "Sister Act" plaintiffs highlighted the fact that both their screenplay and the movie likened nuns to penguins and contained the phrase "God works in mysterious ways." Those aren't *scenes à faire*, exactly, but any screenwriter who didn't include them in a nun comedy would be criminally incompetent. What these suits' lists of similarities reveal is that the human brain is hardwired to write scenes that hurry toward predictable surprise.

Two characters who can't stand each other invariably wind up handcuffed together in a rolling boxcar or a shuffling chain gang. An innocent schnook arriving at an airport must within ten seconds pick up the identical-but-drug-filled suitcase. After the tomboyish girl next door dresses up for the prom, the boy can only look flustered and say, "Why, Miranda, you're, you're . . . beautiful!" Snooty matrons gigglingly confide, as soon as they are within earshot of loud funk music, that all they really want to do is "boogie down" or "knock boots." When hard-bitten military men see an alien spacecraft, they ease off their glasses to peer more closely—and to allow us to register the childlike wonder in their eyes. And heroes who have only moments in which to defuse a ticking bomb rip off the casing to discover the statutory red wire and blue wire—another explosive device crafted, apparently, by the Acme Company for Wile E. Coyote.

Underlying such scenarios, by Hollywood legend, are a mere seven basic stories. Or maybe eight. (Or, as the Supreme Court of California once determined in an excess of hairsplitting, thirty-six.) One legendary core story is "the buddy movie"; another is "ordinary man in extraordinary circumstances"; a third is "boy meets girl, girl hates boy, boy woos girl." But no one can quite agree on what, precisely, the others are (is Eddie Murphy's "Coming to America" "fish out of water" or "lord in disguise"?) or on who thought up the list in the first place (Aristotle? Simpson and Bruckheimer?).

In truth, no one in Hollywood seems to care enough to nail those answers down, since all that matters is what type of story the last hit was. "It's an industry that tries so hard to copy success," Martin Garbus says. "You know there are a lot of people out there writing 'Wag the Dog II,' and when 'Wag the Dog II' comes out everyone's going to sue, saying, 'Hey! That was my idea!' " Perhaps, but not anymore. As long ago as 1945, a federal judge admonished that most copyright suits were premised "partly upon a wholly erroneous understanding of the extent of copyright protection; and partly upon that obsessive conviction, so common among authors and composers, that all similarities between their works and any others which appear later must inevitably be ascribed to plagiarism."

But while the studios may win the copyright battle they aren't exonerated from the charge of laziness in the first degree. The courts seem to have the same feeling upon viewing the plots and characters in evidence that we have upon trailing out of the Cineplex: Haven't we seen this before? One court wrote, with an Olympian weariness that is otherwise found only among film critics, "The common use of such stock . . . merely reminds us that in Hollywood, as in the life of men generally, there is only rarely anything new under the sun." Which is a steal from Ecclesiastes—but tweaked just enough to be original. ♦

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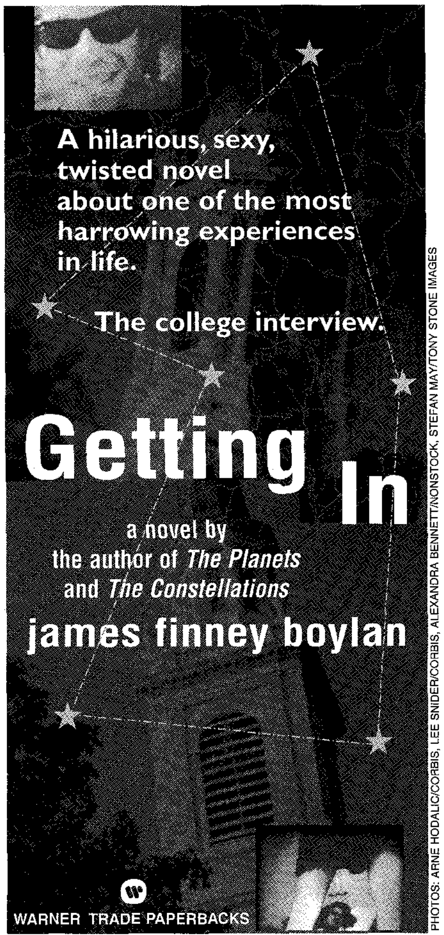

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LETTER FROM EUROPE

THE ONCE AND FUTURE CHANCELLOR

Gerhard Schröder thinks he's the man for today in Germany. Does that make Helmut Kohl yesterday's Chancellor?

BY JANE KRAMER

THIS summer, on my way to Hannover to meet Gerhard Schröder, the man who in a few weeks' time, if the polls are right, may well replace Helmut Kohl as Germany's Chancellor, I stopped in Munich for the new "Tristan und Isolde" at the Bayerische Staatsoper. It was partly indulgence, since I love "Tristan." But it was indulgence in the line of duty, because in my experience the staging of Richard Wagner in Germany is often a more accurate bellwether of that country's famous Zeitgeist than the pronouncements of any pollster or pundit or, indeed, of any politician looking to get himself elected. This "Tristan" was the brainchild of Peter Konwitschny, an East German—not in itself a promising sign, since directors from the former German Democratic Republic tend to lose themselves (and you, too) in thickets of Germanness where Wagner is concerned—so I was delighted to discover, when the overture ended and the curtain rose, the company cruising toward Cornwall on a loopy white yacht that looked to have less to do with a tragic voyage into the soul of Germany than with a summer outing organized by Noël Coward or Raoul Dufy. Isolde and her maid were lounging in deck chairs. Tristan was shaving in his cabin. The love potions were pretty tropical punches, served with straws.

At first, I was the only person in my row smiling. For my neighbors—three hulking transvestites in paste tiaras and a stout Bavarian couple in dress *Trachten*—it was clearly a moment suspended between relief and rage. Wagner Lite? Wagner as comedy? Passion rescued from the dire specificity of a German disease and returned on tiptoe to the human condition? For the next five hours (I would say they flew, but who would believe me?), Mr. Konwitschny tried on and quickly shed most of the conventions and clichés of what is usually referred to here as "the special case" of Germanness—the high drama of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, the homey kitsch, the chilling science. His thickets were thickets—ancient, foreboding trees from an Anselm Kiefer forest—and they fought for the stage with floppy pillows and a flowered couch. His spotlight grids, out of some high-tech torture chamber, lost their battle with the soft candles on the floor. Early on, the lovers themselves began to shed their costumes and drop their props, and, free from "Wagner," they stepped forward in plain black shifts to sing, as if to say that, while the music was divine and love was certainly redemptive, Germany was just a country now and its myths were, after all, only fairy tales with lances.

I've seen a lot of Wagner in Germany. A post-nuclear "Parsifal." A spaceship "Siegfried." Productions caught in the old, arrogant (if entirely Wagnerian) implication that it was the gods, not the Germans, who chose Germany as the high ground where Good and Evil pitched their tents and did battle—that Germans were created to be exceptional. But I had never seen, not until that Munich "Tristan," a production that laughed at itself and broke your heart at the same time, singing its way out of the deadly conflation of history and destiny which has plagued German opera, and German politics, since the Second World War.

It doesn't take long, in Germany, to see that Peter Konwitschny knows his Zeitgeist. There is a new confidence in the country, which has nothing to do with the old arrogance. Germans are learning to look at themselves and laugh. They are writing funny novels and making funny movies (how many German comedies can you remember seeing?), and the local reporters, while dutifully filing stories about this being the most important election in postwar history, actually make you smile. Life is beginning to amuse the Germans, and that amounts to breaking news. It may be that the country is finally recovering—in the sense that people here use the word "recovery" to embrace the whole complicated bundle of moral, political, psychological, and economic legacies of the Third Reich and the Cold War. Young Germans have been complaining for years about wanting to feel "normal," at home and, maybe more important, abroad. (A student in Berlin once told me that she wouldn't feel normal about being German until the day she went to Paris or New York and no one asked her about the Holocaust immediately after she was introduced.) But even young Germans are at a loss to explain why suddenly Germany feels, for better or for worse, like any other country, and proposes to elect a politician like Gerhard Schröder, who has nothing at all to say about the time he refers to, pointedly, as "yesterday."

Part of it, of course, has to do with time passing and generations dying. Part of it has to do with German unification and part of it with the unification of Europe. Germany still has its share—more than its share—of right-wing lunatics, but now those lunatics are considered a problem to deal with, not a second coming. Germany still has its share of post-Wall woes: eleven per cent unemployment (twice that in some of the eastern states); angry debates about the future of the seven million foreigners who live here and have little or no access to citizenship; alarm about the high cost of German labor, and even more alarm about what will happen in 1999, when the euro arrives and Europe's labor markets are left without the benefit of a common European minimum wage or income tax to keep other Europeans more or less at home, and not in Hamburg or Cologne,

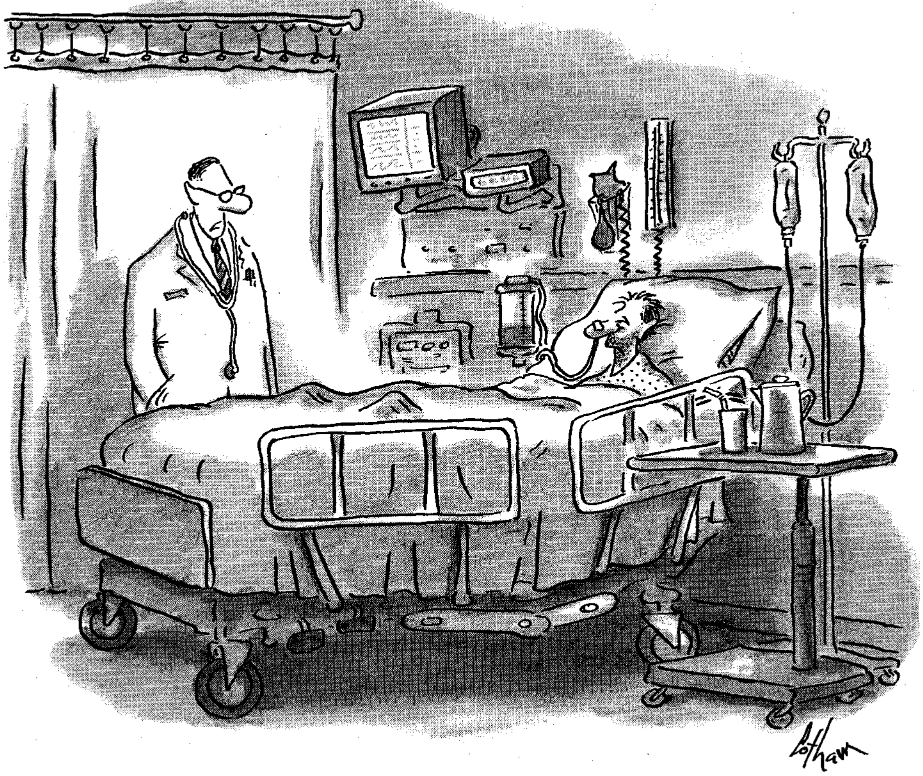
Europe's Mr. Clintonblair, in front of a statue of the Nordic god and Wagnerian hero Wotan. Photograph by Helmut Newton.

looking for better jobs. Germany admits that it is going through a serious economic crisis—especially now, with so many billions of marks out on loan to Russia—but the difference is that nobody in the press or the parliament talks about Weimar, which up to now has been invoked at every troubling economic turn.

Germany today is the richest, most populous state in the European Union, or "Europe," as most Germans call it, with a little emphasis and inflection to distinguish it from the place where they take their vacations and sell their cars. The writer Hans Magnus Enzensberger likes to describe Europe as "Helmut Kohl's plan for saving the Continent for Germany and from Germany," but, whatever most Germans think of Europe, it has to be said that they do not think of it as Lebensraum. They seem at long last to feel comfortable being Germans, and that, I think, is what makes this election so important, and so different. The issues today—jobs, immigrants, welfare, the market—are everybody's issues. They have nothing to do with history.

ENTER Gerhard Schröder, a normal man for a normal Germany, a man for now, as he likes to say when you ask for his thoughts on running the country after this bloody German century. "*Spätgeborenen*" is the word he sometimes uses. He is a man for the generation "born late," the generation whose history is its own, not Germany's.

Schröder is fifty-four, five years older than German democracy and fourteen years younger than Helmut Kohl, who was fifteen when the war ended, and whom Schröder is trying to portray as a man of a past too burdened with history for the new Germans, who go to funny movies and talk about feeling normal—and who, presumably, will vote for Schröder. Kohl came from a *kleinbürgerlich* family in the town of Ludwigshafen. He lost a brother he cherished in the war. He trained in the Hitler Youth, and studied at Heidelberg during the Allied Occupation. He entered Christian Democratic politics—which means Catholic conservative politics—when the Party was still Konrad Adenauer's and the Berlin Wall was rising. As Chancellor, Kohl inherited an Ostpolitik that caught him in a cat-and-mouse game with Erich Honecker until the day he bought East Germany from Mikhail Gorbachev for a twenty-billion-dollar investment in Russia's crumbling empire. He inherited a public debate fixed more on his symbolic course through places like the German military cemetery at Bitburg—places the Germans call "memory sites"—than on his handling of the endgame years of Germany's underwritten economy or his position on the statutes that still keep Germany from having anything like an immigration policy. He inherited the last throes of Red Army Faction violence and a new (or, more accurately, recycled) wave of Nazi violence. He inherited a country known in the war rooms, East and West, as ground zero of any nuclear exchange. And, seven years into his sixteen years in the Chancellery, he inherited seventeen million East Germans, who were going to cost his Federal Republic more money than it had.



I am not the famous heart surgeon, but I am in his medical group.”

Schröder, on the other hand, was in diapers when the war ended. He had lost a father he never knew, and he survived a hardscrabble postwar childhood, with his mother working as a cleaner to feed the family. By fourteen, he had quit school and taken a job in a china shop; at seventeen, he was an apprentice salesman. He studied nights and eventually put himself through law school in Göttingen and began to practice. He became active in Social Democratic politics when the S.P.D. belonged to Willy Brandt and every member under thirty wanted to be a revolutionary and change the world. When the Wall came down, on November 9, 1989, Schröder was forty-five and already a fairly prominent politician. And if Schröder wins the election on September 27th—the polls put him ahead by anywhere from four to ten per cent—he will inherit a united Germany where most people seem to have forgotten the ecstasy and the embraces of November 9th, and where West Germans think of East Germany as a tax burden and a welfare drain at best and, at worst, a ghetto, more lumpen than proletariat, a blight on Germany's reputation for solvency, performance, and status. He will inherit a uniting Europe with commitments to a single currency and an outlay, for Germany, of thirty billion dollars a year in E.U. member payments. He will inherit Germany's seven million foreigners, many of them refugees and on the dole and therefore burdens, too. But he can honestly say that none of these burdens are burdens you can blame on him, or even, if the stories are true, burdens that he was much aware of during his six years in the Bundestag in the nineteen-eighties, or his eight years as the premier (governor would be the

MOMENT

Two small white butterflies settle
into their own moment, the male
lighting without fuss on the female
perched along the flat pink petals
of the cuckoo-flower in the ditch
beside the road to Letterfrack, and she
holding on as he reverses direction.

How they take to each other, facing
opposite ways, green spines aligned
and delicately connected: his wings
fanned open, hers shut fast like hands
to show the fritillary intricacies
of the underwing, as if holding him
to an embrace that will let nothing

come between them. Quiet at first,
they suddenly flutter wildly for a few
long seconds, then quiet again until
a passing car startles them and they
take off across the path of traffic,
still connected body to body as if
he's bearing her away, holding

at a steady height—her weight
his ballast, her wings still folded,
both absorbed in something more
than the species making itself safe
against the predatory crush and fuss
of matter—to land safely in grass,
gone from our sight. It must be

the subdued purposeful air of it all
that holds us, the way this act of theirs
shapes the world we share and spins
for a big instant the globe around
their truth against good sense and
judgment, the scandal of their sex
in tune with things, staining the day.

—Eamon Grennan

closest American title) of Lower Saxony, the job he hopes to be leaving soon.

THERE is a network of sorts among Western reporters who have talked, or tried to talk, with Schröder. They don't always know one another but they recognize the exasperation between the lines they write, and sometimes *in* the lines they write. What they share is, well, the lack of a subject for tomorrow's paper.

"No one . . . was going to catch Mr. Schröder attacking the German model," one of them wrote this summer, describing what you knew had been a long, long interview. Or how about "Schröder alluded to the *visible* differences" between himself and Kohl—meaning that the reporter had asked about foreign policy, but Schröder had talked about age, fat, and fitness. "The candidate raised his eyebrows" is still my favorite line, because part of Schröder's strategy of evasion with the press is body talk—wiggly eyebrows, rolling eyes, a long puff on a Cuban cigar—which passes for something said until you try to write it down.

I met Schröder in late July at Roma, an Italian restaurant in Hannover where the pasta was homemade, the welcome was jolly, and the most useful information in my notebook after a couple of hours had to do with the owner's advice for keeping foxes out of my garden in Italy. (Sprinkle gunpowder. Don't smoke.) We had a long lunch, and compared a lot of spaghetti sauces. Schröder was very precise about the best sauces—truffles, mushrooms, and tomato with basil. Whenever the conversation got too close to politics or policy, he would lean toward my plate accusingly, and say, "Eat!" He loves eating—something of a problem for a man of fifty-four campaigning as a "youth candidate."

He is barrel-chested, solid. He tries, and usually manages, to look tall. He has what everyone agrees are "fierce" or "piercing" blue eyes. His hair is a smooth dark brown, his eyebrows light and shaggy. And, unlike the Chancellor, who is famously louche about his clothes (and only shops in the spring anyway, after an annual Easter diet that wreaks havoc with both his taste and his disposition), Schröder is fastidious, if not vain, about the way he presents himself. The Schröder of ten years back, who posed for one memorable picture wearing splittingly tight tennis shorts, white sneakers, and what appeared to be black dress socks, has been replaced by a smoother, younger-statesman Schröder, who likes pale silk ties, Italian suits, and the ministrations of a pricey barber. He looks very good on television. In person, he looks a little manic, an aging man who might have done better to throw out the Clairol and opt for something more Ray Milland, say, than Alec Baldwin. It is not the best look for a politician who seems to have bought into the belief that in politics image is everything. Still, he has managed to rattle Kohl in ways that none of the four Social Democrats who have tried to unseat him before (Oskar Lafontaine, the chairman of the Social Democratic Party, and Rudolf Scharping, the Party whip, were the two most recent) ever did. It did not escape the Germans that, for the first time in sixteen years, their Chancellor finished his Easter diet as overweight as he began it.

SCHRÖDER'S wife, Doris, is a reporter. She has worked for the tabloids *Express* and *Bild*, for a mass-market Munich weekly called *Focus*, and, most recently, for a Hannover station called

Hit-Radio. She met Schröder in 1995, when she was covering a Party congress. Two years later, she moved to Hannover, and in October of 1997, a few weeks after Schröder had divorced his third wife, they were married. ("I was always an optimist," he told me.) Today, à la Clintonblair, as people in Germany put it, the Schröders are working the hustings together as a power couple, and Doris Schröder-Köpf, which is the name she chose, is called an adviser to the campaign. It's hard to imagine an Italian or a Frenchman hitting the campaign trail with his wife beside him, let alone asking for his wife's advice. Even Margaret Thatcher tried to leave Denis at home, and no one has ever thought to ask Kohl about Hannelore Kohl's "role" in German politics—they assume that her role is in the kitchen.

Schröder likes to talk about his wife's career. It was not an exceptional career: she comes from a working-class family and never got to go to college, and most of the reporting she did for places like *Bild* and *Focus* had to do with what Germans call "social affairs." Nor, since Doris is only thirty-five, was it a particularly long career. But by all accounts it was a shrewd and fairly successful one, and her story is now part of the born-late image that Schröder is selling: he will be the first German Chancellor in history to have a wife who worked. He will also be the first German Chancellor whose working wife was a single mother—she has a seven-year-old daughter, whose father is a television journalist and whom Schröder calls "my daughter." Finally, he will be the first German Chancellor whose single-mother-working-wife knows America. She lived in New York for more than two years; she has pushed a cart through the Saturday mob at Zabar's; and she is fluent in English. It didn't surprise me that Schröder's handlers consider her an asset.

Doris Schröder-Köpf is straightforward about her past, and about how difficult it was, working and trying to raise a child alone. She brought this up when she dropped by Roma, toward the end of my lunch with Schröder—perhaps because she assumed I already knew the story and perhaps because she worried about how the story would play in the prosecutorial precincts of Ken Starr's America. She said, "To be very, very frank, I felt I couldn't make it in New York—I couldn't make it as a single mother. So I came back." She couldn't know how relieved I was to be out of America then, and in a country where "life" was not a synonym for "scandal," despite the feeling I had that I was being set up for what the Germans call a *gemütlicher Schnack*—a nice little chat. A girl chat. Schröder withdrew for a meeting, and left us gossiping about people we knew in New York, and about husbands working too hard, and about how impossible it was to get them to take vacations. We didn't talk about politics. "I can't say, suddenly, 'I'm a wife, I'm not interested in politics,'" she told me. "But I don't say taxes have to rise or fall. I stay in my field."

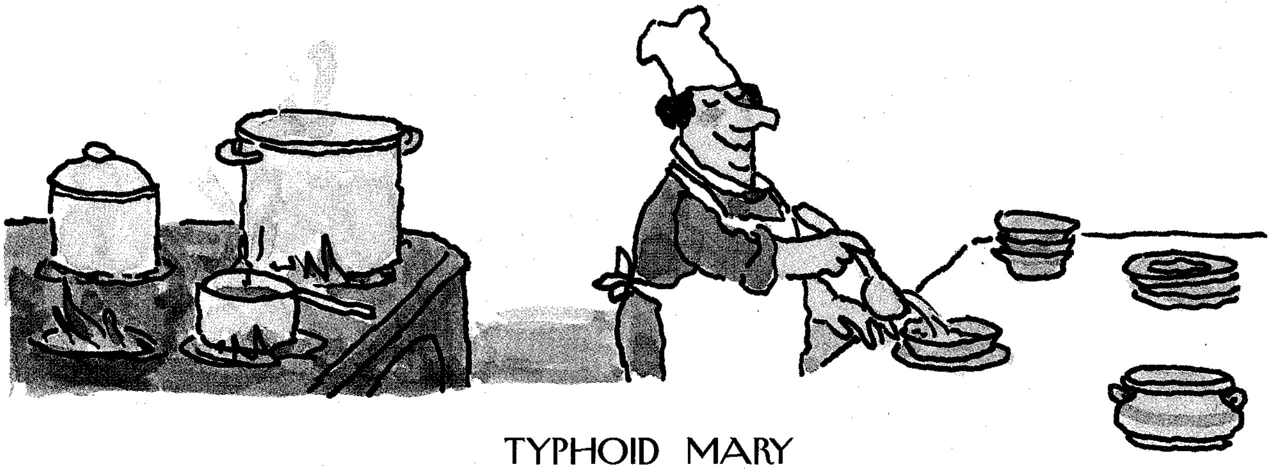
Most people I had asked about Schröder's wives assumed that he acquired a new wife every time he was about to change his politics—that his marriages were harbingers, so to speak, of the next stage in his own image and his own career. His first wife was his student wife; they married during his law-school days. No one could tell me much about his second wife, except that they were together in the Young Socialists, but the third, whose name is Hiltrud and who joked about being called Hillary, was his ecological wife, for his premier days in Lower Saxony. They were together for thirteen years, and she courted the Greens for him (he had a coalition with the Greens during his first term in Lower Saxony), playing what people describe as the bleeding heart to Schröder's realist. They were, if anything, even more of a public couple than he and Doris. Hiltrud raised consciousness for Chernobyl, while Schröder negotiated nuclear-waste disposal at home. Her causes were vegetarianism and gay and lesbian rights; his causes had to do with keeping Volkswagen and its eighty thousand workers happy to be making their cars in Lower Saxony. "It was a show and she played it," one of their friends told me. When he went on television for an interview, Hiltrud went on television with him. When he made a decision, Hiltrud called it "our decision." She liked talking about "when we become Chancellor," and if he stumbled, if he said something or did something impolitic on their way to the Chancellery, she read him the riot act at dinner. It was not a peaceful marriage—not as their friends describe it, or as she herself describes it in a book she wrote after the Party produced a biography of him. Her book was called "On My Feet," and, although she clearly meant it to discredit Schröder (she had thrown him out of the house when she found out about Doris), no one in Germany paid much attention to it, least of all the candidate.

Now Schröder has what his Hannover neighbor Oskar Negt, an old Frankfurt School sociologist, calls "nice, calm dinners with a cheerful wife." There are no loud phone calls to interrupt his meetings. In fact, the only things his last two wives seem to have in common is that both are pretty, if preternaturally thin, dress well, and look terrific in the color pages of *Spiegel* and *Stern*.

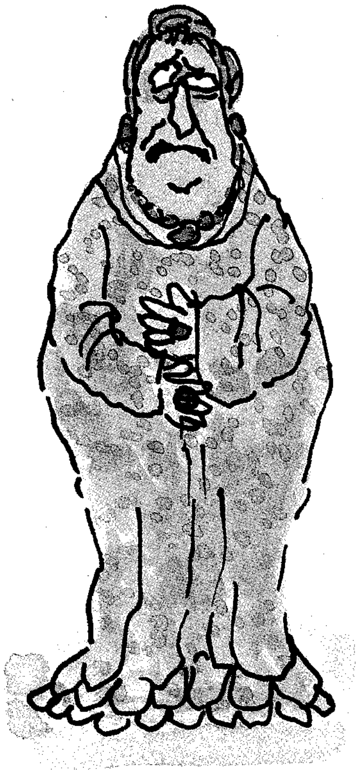
UP to now, Schröder has really had only one true talent as a politician. It's a considerable talent, though it has nothing to do with people who are born late or with changing Germany. He has kept not just Volkswagen but Lower Saxony happy, or (and probably more to the point) he has convinced Lower Saxony that it's happy and that this is because of him. He is extremely popular around Hannover. His knowledge of the rest of the world, even of the rest of Europe, is limited. Oskar Lafontaine, who comes from Saarland, on the French border, knows Europe much better than Schröder does, and so does Rudolf Scharping. Scharping can sit down and discuss the risks of overvaluing the mark in Europe and the jobs that are lost because of an overvalued mark at home; he can relate the subsidizing of Germany's repatriated *Aussiedler*—the government spends five and a half billion dollars a year on ethnic Germans exercising their legal right of return—to what is to his mind the comparatively modest cost of Germany's European membership.

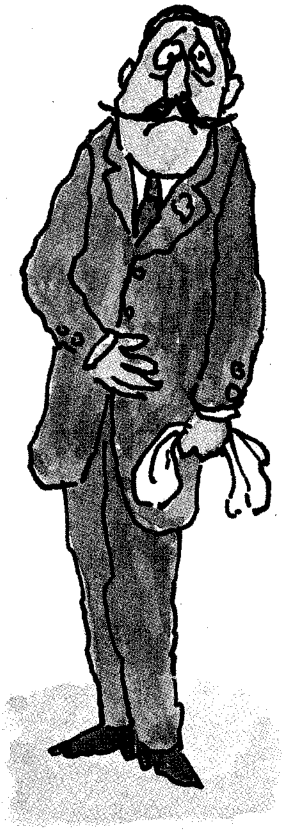
These are not the sort of details that interest Gerhard Schröder. His friends and his enemies agree that he has a deeply provincial suspicion of anything beyond the psychic borders of his familiar world, the world he has mastered. His friends say this to explain his popularity and his focus, adding that, as Chancellor, he will simply extend those borders and (as one of them told me) "make Germany his family." His enemies say it to expose his ignorance. There are a lot of Social Democrats in the Bundestag who regard Schröder as a

SKETCHBOOK BY WILLIAM STEIG



TYPHOID MARY





"Cooking," Typhoid Mary murmured,
"Is my means of self-expression.
And, of course, I earn my living
Practicing the cook's profession.

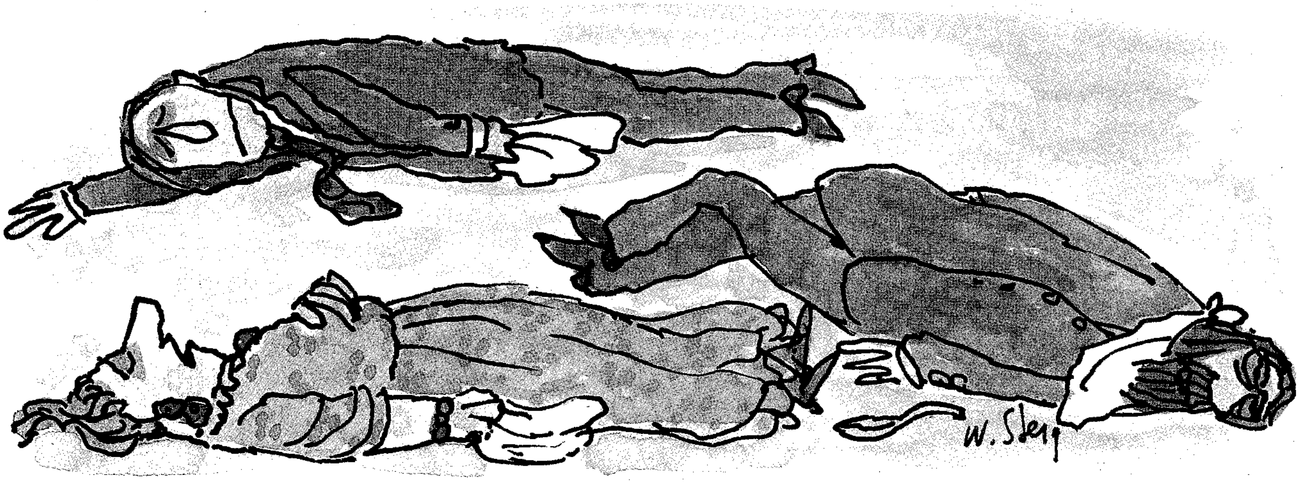
"Think then, what an inconvenience!
Every kitchen I'd inhabit
Seemed to serve up typhoid fever
With my fricassee of rabbit!

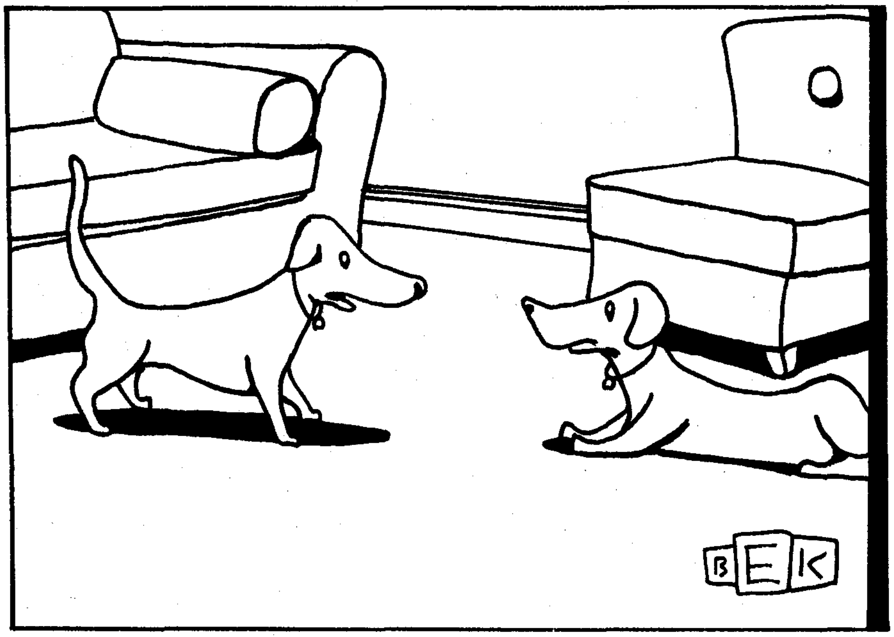
"Mine the dumplings, light as zephyrs,
In the bowl when illness gripped them.
Mine as well the fragrant sauces
Into which the poor souls dipped them.

"Dr. Soper, evil genius,
Sought me, caught me, and confined me.
'Quarantined for life!' " she whispered.
"My creative years behind me.

"Does it not, dear friend, seem callous,
Thus to wrench away my ladle?
Of the fifty-one infected,
Only three were struck down fatal!"

—JEANNE STEIG





"It's the naps you don't take that you regret the most."

• •

carpetbagger, poaching on their preserve, and they all have stories about the things that Schröder doesn't know. One story has him only just discovering that next year it's Germany's turn, and thus, conceivably, *his* turn, to preside over the European Union. Another has him flying to Strasbourg for "Europe lessons." None of these stories are very encouraging to bankers and economists here, since 1999 is not only the year that the euro becomes Germany's currency but also the year that Europe's new agricultural arrangements—the lion's share of Germany's contribution to the E.U. goes to agricultural subsidies—will be settled.

For a long time, Schröder opposed the euro. (The euro was not much liked in Lower Saxony.) He opposed the size of the subsidies. (The subsidies were not much liked there, either.) He was said to have an "eastward" interest when it came to Germany's economic partners. At one time or another, he was against unification, he was against NATO, he was against the deployment of German troops anywhere in the world for any reason.

The bankers are probably wrong to worry. Schröder has adjusted his politics to what he calls "the pragmatics" of the moment, with a candor that can actually be quite disarming in a country where ideology has repeatedly proved so tragic. He sees himself as a fixer, a mediator, a something-for-everyone, consensual sort of person. He learned to love the market, not to mention the pleasant company of the rich, when, as premier of Volkswagen's home state, he joined the Volkswagen board. On the other hand, he didn't hesitate, last year, to arrange for the state to take over a steel company near Hannover, which was about to be absorbed into an Austrian company at a loss of up to twelve thousand Lower Saxon jobs. Nor did he hesitate, this year, to announce a plan for floating shares in that steel company. His friends call this "Gerhard's flexibility." ("They think he's a savior in Lower Saxony," one told me. "He works things out.") His critics call it a recipe for disaster, and say that Schröder is capable of taking so many sides on the same issue that it amounts to having no position at all. But Schröder himself calls it "learning from reality." He has said, on more than one occasion, "When reality collides with your political program, you have to consider that your political program could be wrong."

Right now, Schröder seems to have found a rubric for all this pragmatism. He has become an enthusiast of that flexible, free-market-with-a-heart-of-somebody-else's-gold society which is known in the West as the Third Way, and has been reminted by his own writers as the New Middle. (It sounds better in German: *die neue Mitte.*) It is not a middle he can really describe, or wants to describe, and no one around him can describe it, either, because his entourage includes people of such alarmingly conflicting ideas of government as to cancel out anything that looks like policy or direction. (Schröder has tapped Lafontaine, an old-line socialist with a powerful labor base, to be his Finance Minister, and Jost Stollman, a young supply-side software entrepreneur, to be his Economics Minister. Stollman says that he could just as easily work for Kohl, and, in fact, he would be right at home with Mrs. Thatcher.) Schröder calls this ideological olio "keeping myself open to opinion," and says that it is "the modern way"—I would say "the postmodern way"—the way normal leaders in normal countries behave.

Two weeks ago, with some reluctance and under a great deal of Party pressure, Schröder did produce a hazy sort of platform, having to do with cutting subsidies, lowering taxes, creating an "alliance for jobs," and at the same time preserving "social justice" (read "benefits and welfare"), but until then, when people tried to catch him out having an opinion or an idea, let alone a platform, he would tell them what he told me: "After the election, you'll be the first to know." He calls this running "an American campaign." He thinks of Clintonblair as an object lesson in the art of never making waves, never making enemies, never saying anything that offends anyone. When I remarked that some Democrats in the American Congress were not as enthusiastic about Clinton's "flexibility" as Schröder seemed to be, he leaned over, wiggled his eyebrows, and said, "He won, didn't he?"

Schröder also likes to compare himself with Kohl. It drives his party crazy, but he does it to remind you that Kohl was once a provincial premier, too: that Kohl had the same popular support in Rhineland-Palatinate that Schröder has in Lower Saxony; that it gave him the same sort of grassroots-voter power; that he, too, first went to Bonn as an outsider among the worldlier men who sat in the Bundestag and received important foreign delegations and were invited to speak at the Council on Foreign Relations. Schröder wants you to know that people said the same things about

Helmut Kohl's provincialism in 1982—the year Kohl took the Chancellery away from his predecessor, Helmut Schmidt—that they say about Schröder's now. In fact, Schröder maintains that Kohl succeeded *because* of a reputation for provincialism. He told me that Germans were tired of Schmidt and his "foreign-policy reputation." They wanted someone focussed on their own problems—someone, as he put it to me, like Clinton, who knew that the magic words were "jobs, jobs, jobs."

SCHRÖDER isn't the Social Democrats' great white hope because the guys at Party Central, in Bonn, like him—Bonn prefers Scharping—or even because the rank and file of the Party likes him. The rank and file, which is to say the old-fashioned German worker, likes Lafontaine, who is thought by market liberals to be just slightly to the right of Castro. Lafontaine badly wanted to run again, but he had lost in 1990 because of a weakness for lecturing Germans on unpleasant truths. He told the West Germans that unification was going to be expensive and that they would possibly regret it, and he told the East Germans not to expect "the blooming landscape" of Helmut Kohl's campaign speeches. (His gloomy predictions, having been borne out, were not forgiven.) The Party was under few illusions about the likelihood of a second chance for anyone in German politics. It wanted a new, young face—a truly born-late sort of person—and there were not many faces younger than Schröder's in the Social Democratic leadership, not with any real experience or following.

Most of the blame lay with Helmut Schmidt. He was not a man given to nurturing successors, or even to thinking about successors, and, at any rate, by 1974, the year he took over the Chancellery from Willy Brandt, most of the promising young men and women on the German left were not so interested in him. From the point of view of young people on the German left—something of a tautology in the nineteen-seventies—Schmidt's only concession to the working class was the Hamburg fisherman's cap he affected, and his only cause was turning Germany into an American missile site. It wasn't entirely true, but Schmidt never bothered to court, or even to correct, them. They joined the Greens en masse, turning the Greens into a parliamentary party and depleting the Social Democrats of at least a generation. In the process, they left the Young Socialists—the S.P.D.'s youth group and its traditional source of new talent—languishing in the hands of people Schröder's age. Schröder took over the Young Socialists in 1978, when he was thirty-four and was in what people who know him well call his Young Turk incarnation. It was a mark of Schmidt's appreciation that he came down from Hamburg to endorse Schröder at the Party congress last April—the first time Schmidt had endorsed an S.P.D. candidate since he left office, sixteen years before.

By April, the polls had already positioned Schröder as the only Social Democrat capable of beating Kohl, and Schröder had long since struck a deal with the Party. The deal had been simple: if Schröder won a third term in Lower Saxony in March—in elections that were thus transformed from a local race for a local parliament into a kind of federal primary—he could declare as the Party's undisputed candidate. ("I'm ready," the posters said.) He won handsomely, despite the fact that Kohl himself showed up in Lower Saxony eleven times to campaign for Christian Wulff, the young Christian Democrat running against him. Schröder took this as a sign that the Chancellor had reason to believe the polls, too.

PEOPLE who know Schröder say that he was never really as worried about Kohl as he was about the competition in his own party, the most worrisome competitor being Lafontaine. Lafontaine is not "popular" in the Schröder sense. "Do I like him?" Heribert Prantl, the *Süddeutsche Zeitung's* political columnist, says. "Not personally. But as a politician I know who he is." Prantl means that, unlike Schröder, Lafontaine *has* a politics. I have heard him described as "a son of a bitch, but smart, smart." He is also a survivor. He survived having his throat slit by a madwoman who attacked him at a rally eight years ago, he survived reports involving a shady Saarbrücken acquaintance who was tried for murder, and he survived a reputation for womanizing which is known in Germany as "Oskar's red-light problem" and would make Bill Clinton look like a cautious swain. Lafontaine has never been gentle with his own competition. It's said that he made his deal with Schröder because he believed that he couldn't last, that it would be a matter of a year, at

"My client would like to do his community service in the financial community."

most, until any government led by Schröder collapsed and Lafontaine would be left to form a new one. He may have even welcomed the deal. A lot of Social Democrats welcomed it, convinced that by next spring or summer there would be a *grosse Koalition* in Germany—a "grand coalition" of Social Democrats and Christian Democrats, which Lafontaine would lead.

I think they underestimated Schröder. When I asked him about Lafontaine, he gave me a very Schröderish answer. First, he claimed that they were old, close friends; they had "more than the usual" political friendship, he said, and he was right, since the usual political friendship is not so savage. Second, he admitted that Lafontaine would kill for the job, but said that, alas, it was not to be, because "the people of Lower Saxony had decided"—meaning, of course, that the people of Germany had decided. Third, he got to the point: he said to remember that in this media age the office of the Chancellor carries an authority and a celebrity that "no one and no party can deflect," and he added, "That's not just for the campaign, it's for the future." What he was really saying is that, once inside the building that he had stood in front of as a much less circumspect, younger man, quite drunk and shaking the gate and shouting, "I want to be *in here!*," he had no intention of leaving.

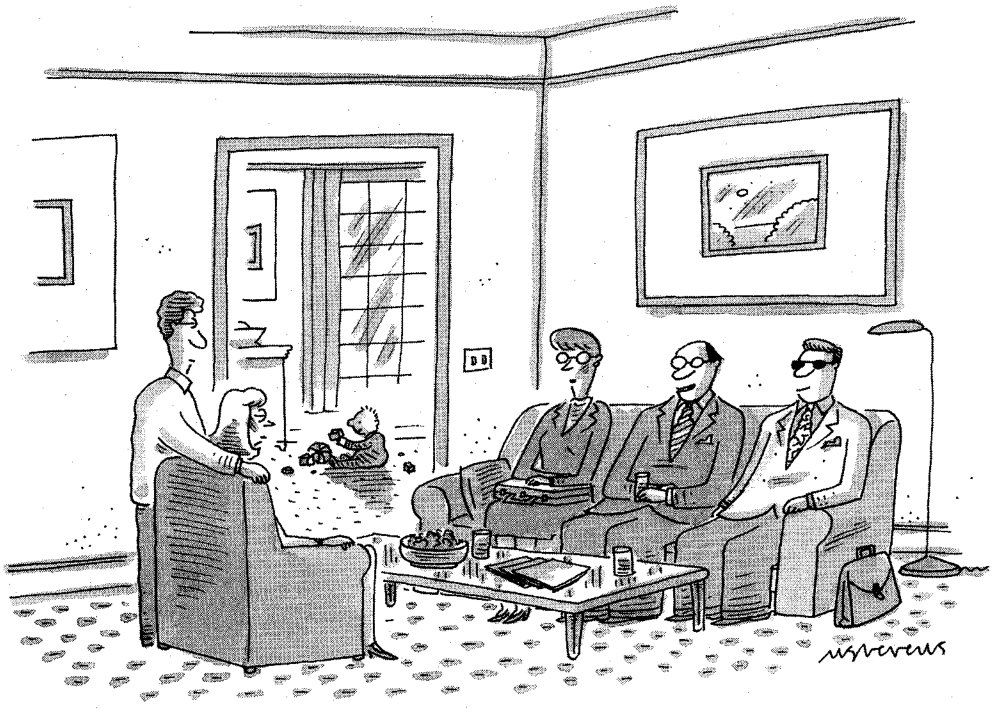
He may not have to. He has a talent for creating reality by declaring it. Christian Wulff, still a little bewildered by his April loss, told me that Schröder's popularity is "complicated." He said that there's not much Schröder can claim in Lower Saxony by way of accomplishment—not much more than Clinton could claim in Arkansas. Schröder kept inflating the bureaucracy (it was, after all, *his* bureaucracy), but he couldn't attract new industries and, according to Wulff, he didn't really try. Unemployment rose. Education suffered. Three thousand schoolteachers have lost their jobs over the past eight years, and the budget was cut so drastically at the University of Hannover that by now it looks like a ghetto high school in some grisly television thriller about New York. Wulff said that, to his mind, Schröder's success had less to do with anything concrete than with an almost uncanny ability to reduce the complex to the simple, to second-guess the majority, and to play the media to his advantage. "He'll smile at a red light if you tell him it's a camera" is the way Wulff put it.

A friend of mine who spent some time in a Schröder brain trust calls this "Gerhard's 'instrumental intelligence,'" and he says that it wouldn't surprise him in the least if Schröder used that intelligence to control the Party that expects to control him. And one of Schröder's oldest friends—they go back thirty years—told me that she had discovered his odd authority watching him, as a young lawyer, argue cases: "He didn't really know the law. He was never the one who wrote the briefs, who had the thoughts, who did the research, but he was the one who could argue—and he always won."

A FEW days before I met Schröder, I turned on the television in my hotel room and heard a pair of interviewers ask him if some news about the economy finally beginning to recover under Kohl could hurt his chances. Schröder replied, "The economy is improving because of *me*." The reaction was thunderous. The *Süddeutsche Zeitung* cried, "Disaster for the Social Democrats." The Christian Democrats called it "the summit of shamelessness." And even the Social Democrats—Scharping made the statement—said sorry, the candidate was wrong, there's no recovery till *we're* in power.

This was an understandable statement, inasmuch as Kohl's economic crisis was supposed to be the selling point of the Schröder campaign. But, in his "instrumental" way, Schröder had been right about the economy. He told me later, "I didn't want the other side to claim the recovery for itself." The economy *was* recovering (remember, this was a month before the ruble crashed), and, while part of that recovery clearly involved some fancy election-countdown footwork by the government and part involved the statistical fruits of some fairly brutal cuts in the public-works budget over the past two years, most of them in East Germany, it had at least as much to do with the preëlection mood in Germany.

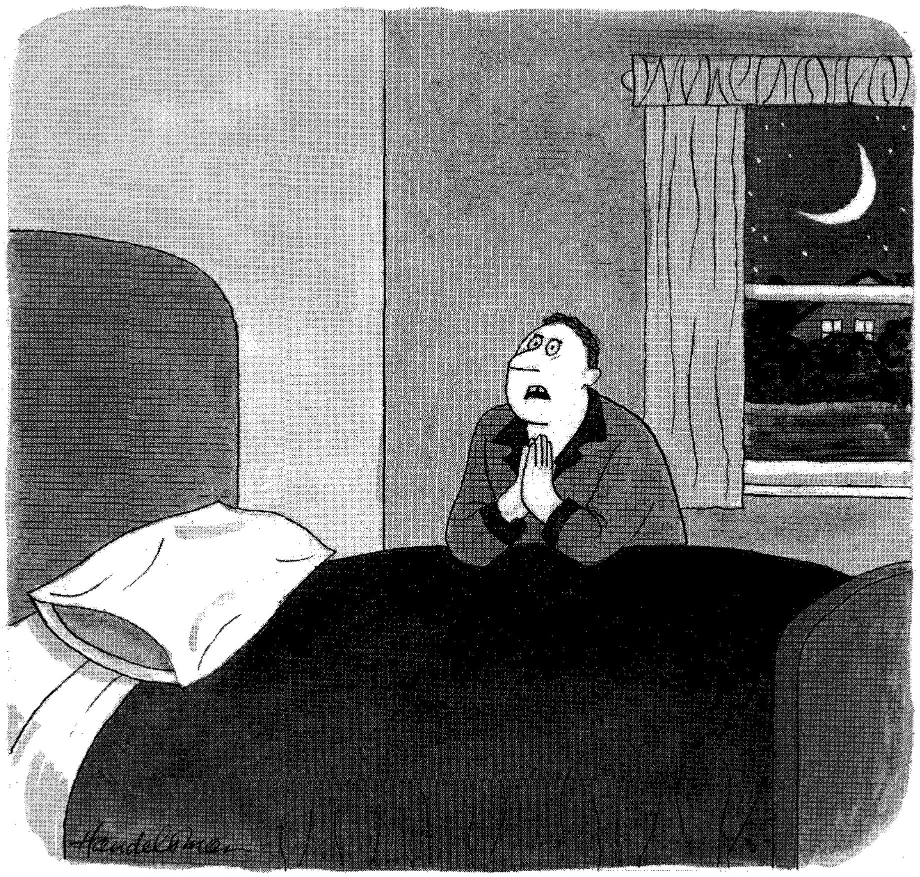
One of Schröder's political friends, who admits that Schröder is "rather cold," says that his ambition for himself is the only part of him you have to acknowledge in order to understand him. He told me the other day that, in his experience, even if Schröder tried to be different he'd never really manage. But that was precisely what he liked about Schröder.



"We've travelled the world looking for our next C.E.O., as was foretold in our corporate legends. We think your little Tim might be that C.E.O."

"He doesn't try to be somebody else. All the others, the old pols, they try to talk about 'the people's wishes.' Schröder wants to talk about his own wishes. What a relief, finally!"

Konrad Adam, an astute conservative columnist at the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, says that Schröder's appeal has to do with the impression he gives of being somehow "self-made" as a politician—of being in the Party but "not of the Party." Germans like it when Schröder gets into trouble with his own people for being himself, for saying something obvious. They like it when he asserts what he hopes will pass for his independence (and not his cynicism), with a Party-be-damned sort of statement that in one breath undoes all the rhetoric hammered out by the various squabbling factions at S.P.D. headquarters. They like it so much that I began to wonder if the spectacle wasn't scripted: Schröder says "Yes!" and his party says "Absolutely no!" and millions of voters take it as proof that Schröder is a new man, another Clintonblair.



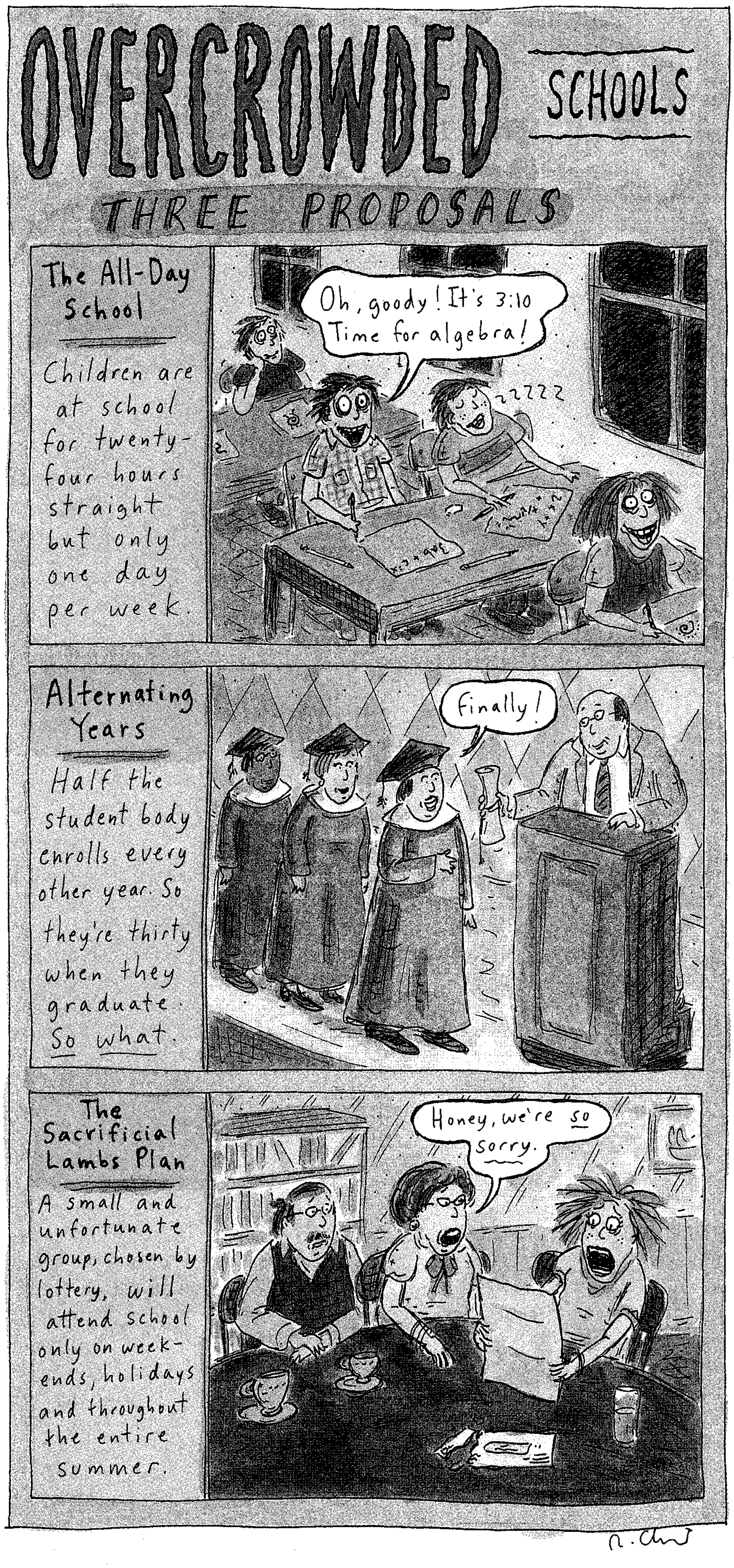
"I asked You, in the nicest possible way, to make me a better person, but apparently You couldn't be bothered."

• •

KOHL never behaved that way with his Christian Democrats; he dominated them so completely that maybe he never had to. Kohl was driven by a vision that in some ways left his party, and even Germany, behind. He was obsessed with statecraft. ("Politicians must have *plans*," Helmut Schmidt said recently when the two old men were reminiscing. "Politicians must have visions," Kohl said.) Kohl is a historian by training, and he has been obsessive, impervious, and occasionally quite reckless in the pursuit of the causes he counts on to settle his place in history. People who think of him as a cracker barrel in form and character, a curmudgeonly old fellow with a wurst in one hand and a stein of beer in the other, forget the fact that he has a doctorate in political history and that the milestones of his sixteen years in the Chancellery—the unification of the two Germanys and the monetary unification of eleven European states—were hardly popular causes with German voters, who are, after all, the people paying, and paying and paying. He taxed the West to fund an exchange at parity of the two German currencies (one of them arguably the strongest in the world and the other worthless) and to subsidize an Eastern recovery that has yet to happen, and in the process he invested so much money in the East that Germany's public sector rose to more than fifty per cent of its economy. Then, two years ago, he started to strip his subsidies, East and West, in order to meet the "euro standards" which he, more than anybody else at the table at Maastricht, had designed.

The left has reason to accuse Kohl of plunging the country into hard times—hard, at least, for Germany, after forty-five years of what amounted to an Allied underwriting of prosperity. Helmut Schmidt could never have got away (and never wanted to get away) with anything like the dole according to Helmut Kohl; Kohl lavished so many subsidies on industry, so many tax breaks on investors, and so many benefits on workers that one American in Bonn told me that his real genius lay in turning the Christian Democratic Party into the Social Democratic Party with no one in Germany any the wiser. Never mind. The fact remains that the Europe he built, like the Germany he put together, will be in the history books long after this year's problems have disappeared. Spiros Simitis, who teaches law in Frankfurt and advises an important E.U. commission, describes him this way: "He likes to sit in his office now, in his big chair, and give his monologues. If you interrupt, he says, 'You don't understand.' He's entered history. He's in another world. He looks down on the things other people—people like us—talk about."

Now that the elections are a couple of weeks off, some Germans are getting sentimental about the Chancellor. People who laughed at him before, or thought they loathed him, are saying that maybe he should have a fifth term as a kind of courtesy—a chance to sit back and enjoy his office and his big chair after so many years of fighting the odds. They seem aware for the first time that, whatever his reputation at home, Kohl has garnered considerable stature abroad—that he is not a caricature to the politicians they admire. They suspect that, despite the nods to Schröder from other people's New Middles and


OVERCROWDED SCHOOLS
THREE PROPOSALS
The All-Day School
Children are at school for twenty-four hours straight but only one day per week.
Oh, goody! It's 3:10 Time for algebra!
zzzzz
Alternating Years
Half the student body enrolls every other year. So they're thirty when they graduate. So what.
Finally!
The Sacrificial Lambs Plan
A small and unfortunate group, chosen by lottery, will attend school only on weekends, holidays and throughout the entire summer.
Honey, we're so sorry.
R. Chast

Third Ways, most leaders in the West are fond of Kohl, and more comfortable with the idea of Kohl than with a man who remains so innocent of the ways (and pronunciations) of the world beyond Lower Saxony that he stunned the French Prime Minister, Lionel Jospin, by constantly calling him Lionel, as in Lionel Trains.

Schröder, on the other hand, seems to have grasped the idea that the enemy isn't Kohl so much as it is nostalgia for Kohl. He has even tried to preëmpt it. Schröder may be the only Social Democrat in Germany who refuses to criticize the Chancellor. He talks respectfully, if shrewdly, about Kohl's "triumphs" and "achievements," leaving, it has to be said, a vague impression that he is Kohl's anointed successor, that he is somehow battling the Chancellor with the Chancellor's blessing. A Bonn diplomat who knows them both told me last week that after a summer of back-and-forth thinking he had reached the conclusion that, while it might be easier for *him* if Kohl were reëlected, it would be psychologically terrible for Germany. He said that Germany would "turn sour," because keeping Kohl would be like keeping "the past," and right now in Germany the past is a trope for a place that is still not totally acceptable. "The Germans want lightening up," he said—we were talking about the new German comedies—"and at the same time they have this overwhelming need for security and stability." He meant, like almost everyone else I saw in Germany, that what Schröder is selling is the illusion of change and the security of no change. People expect the left to win; they expect something different, but not really that different, not really threatening or disturbing, in the way that, say, Ostpolitik or unification was disturbing. Astrid Hölscher, at the *Frankfurter Rundschau*, put it this way: "The word 'reform' has a bad smell here—it means more taxes, fewer visits to the dentist. People want change, but they also know how good they have it. Three times a year, they go on vacation. The real party here is the Tuscany Faction."

SCHRÖDER'S neighbor Oskar Negt showed me a book he wrote this year with Schröder in mind. "Seven points," he said, "on how to build a society of labor." He is hoping that Schröder will read the book; Negt describes his unlikely friend, delicately, as "a man who learns by listening, not books."

Negt is one of a group of left-wing German intellectuals who have made it their mission to enlighten Schröder—to give him a crash course in social values and, they hope, save Germany from the kind of free-market theology that is to their minds even more alarming than Kohl's Catholic paternalism. The group used to meet for dinner five or six times a year in Hannover, and Schröder was always invited and usually came. Now they organize what they call Schröder's "public encounters with intellectuals." His first encounter was a conversation in Berlin last June with the philosopher Jürgen Habermas. (One of the philosopher's friends called it "hallucinatory," and an American who saw it on television called it "the moral bite versus the sound bite"; Habermas himself told me that it was "less than reassuring as far as an innovative political response to the crisis of globalization was concerned.") Late last month, he had another, even more richly ludicrous, encounter—a Berlin rally where the group let the French pick the intellectuals and ended up with Jack Lang playing Socrates in a series of dialogues that featured, among others, Bernard-Henri Lévy, with an entourage of photographers and a shirt open to the waist, and the ubiquitous Elie Wiesel.

Negt and his group may not have got the candidate to read Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, but they did play a part in getting him to name a Minister of Culture to his shadow cabinet. It may be a mark of Doris Schröder-Köpf's New York influence that he didn't name one of them. The man he chose was Michael Naumann, an intellectual, but a practical intellectual, who used to write for *Die Zeit*, and then ran the Hamburg publishing house Rowohlt and, most recently, Henry Holt, in New York. Nauman was a powerful publisher, with a list, at Rowohlt, that introduced Germans to some very good American writing and gave him his reputation as one of the few cosmopolitans in a largely provincial crowd. One of the first things he did for Schröder was to persuade him to distance himself from a project for a gigantesque Holocaust memorial planned for the center of Berlin, approved by Kohl, and sponsored by a woman whom Schröder had once appointed to run the television station in Lower Saxony. Naumann said that the only appropriate, let alone decent, Holocaust memorial for Germany would be a promise to keep the concentration camps open to the public and to encourage Germans to see them.

TODAY, the speculation in Germany is less about Schröder's chance of winning—most Germans assume that he'll win—than about the kind of government he'll put together when he does win. Given the country's parliamentary system, there is virtually no way for either of the two big parties to win an absolute majority and govern alone. German governments are almost by definition coalition governments, and right now most of the legitimate small German parties—the Greens, the Liberals, and even the old East German Communists in their new clothes as the Party of Democratic Socialism—are fractured, undisciplined, unreliable, and unstable. Part of this has to with Germans kicking their heels free of what one writer calls "the oppressive German *Gemeinschaft*, the constraints of community at its most 'German.'" (You could say at its most "Wagnerian.") Part has to do with a lack among younger German politicians of any real depth and breadth in their culture and in the ideas they hold, or think they hold, a lack of that intellectual perspective which is considered too close to "history" to be fashionable now.

The Liberals—which is another way of saying the Free Democratic Party, or F.D.P.—are now in the hands of a lawyer named Guido Westerwelle, a young man of overweening arrogance and overwhelming shallowness, whose view of the terrible problems in the East, at least when he spoke to me, was: "There are only seventeen million people in East Germany. There are sixty million West Germans!" The great old men of the Liberal establishment—classic European liberals with a platform for economic freedom and a passion for civil rights—say that they have no place in the Party now that all their secular principles have been reduced to an economic index. Burkhard Hirsch, one of the vice-presidents of the Bundestag and indisputably the conscience of the F.D.P., is leaving politics this year, at sixty-eight. He says that it isn't simply the Party, it's that he feels he has no place in a parliament dominated by Schröder, "who's always there when there's something to eat," or even by Kohl, "who has to leave if he wants what's best for the country." The Liberals have been the linchpin in every ruling coalition since the days of Willy Brandt's grand coalition of Social Democrats and Christian Democrats, in the nineteen-sixties. Schröder could never form that kind of government now, or even consider it—not with Westerwelle as the Liberal leader. The Social Democrats would refuse, and it isn't clear, anyway, that the kind of Liberals running today can win enough votes for a parliamentary delegation.

What most Social Democrats would like to see is a coalition with the Greens—a Red-Green coalition, like the one Schröder had in Lower Saxony—but the Greens have been behaving so strangely that it's not clear they'll make it into parliament, either. The Greens have always made a point of Party democracy: they have no leaders, or, more accurately, they have a haphazardly rotating leadership; and they abjure anything like an official Party position, which leaves anyone in the Party free to speak his mind in the Party's name. At one time or another this year, various Greens have demanded an Autobahn speed limit (close to blasphemy in Germany); an agreement to triple the price of gas; a law that no German be allowed to travel by airplane more than once in five years; and—this started with a Bavarian Green—a curfew "for the protection of women" which would keep all men off the streets and in their houses after 10 P.M. Joschka Fischer, an extremely able politician, who is known all over Germany as "the smart Green" and is said to be Schröder's choice for Foreign Minister in a Red-Green coalition, has had to spend most of his own campaign on damage control. One of his friends told me, "It's tragic for Joschka. How can they give him a job like that when he'll have to say, 'Sorry, I can't fly to Washington to see Ms. Albright. I have to go to a meeting in Stuttgart to discuss whether I can fly at all.'"

A lot of German intellectuals say that they intend to vote for the Greens; they want to protest what they see as a

"And this is Helen, my wife by a previous marriage."

crisis of values in German politics, and especially in the politics of the party they still refer to as "Willy Brandt's party." But a lot of German intellectuals don't add up to a lot of Germans, and the danger for Schröder in a Red-Green coalition isn't hard to fathom: it would be a narrow coalition and, almost by definition, a fragile coalition—one that could collapse in a moment over a speed limit or the cost of filling up your car. In a way, the Greens are a lobby in parliamentary clothes. They have an amazing following—more than seven per cent of the vote in 1994—but the convictions that keep them pure, and that intellectuals find so amusing and appealing, are just what make them alarming partners for a politician like Schröder. Schröder says he even wonders about Joschka Fischer, now that Fischer has applied his Green principles to his own body—stopped smoking and drinking and started running six miles a day and following a diet so extreme that half of Germany clocks his progress. But Schröder has courted the Greens because the S.P.D. expects it, and because, as Heribert Prantl says, "he knows the Greens have all the good young people." His strategy has been to take their ideas for his own when those ideas are fashionable. One young Green put it this way: "He doesn't like to offer us anything until it's too late."

WHAT Schröder wants, quite apart from what his party wants, is to lead a grand coalition with the Christian Democrats. When we talked in July about the choice between a narrow majority with the Greens or a *compromesso storico*, German style, with the opposition, he told me that his feelings were "fifty-fifty." Since in July his party was refusing even to discuss a coalition with the right, I took this to mean that Schröder rather enjoyed the prospect of running a government he could call a government of *all* the people, a government that left him, to borrow his favorite phrase, open to opinion, and not beholden to the Greens or to Oskar Lafontaine or, for that matter, to anything but his own wits—a government that no one in or out of his party could afford to challenge. These days, he is talking openly, and even enthusiastically, about a coalition of Social Democrats and Christian Democrats.

There is obviously no question of a grand coalition with Helmut Kohl relegated to the role of Vice-Chancellor. Last year, Kohl named Wolfgang Schäuble as his successor, and ordinarily the job would go to him. Schäuble is Schröder's age, and is arguably one of the most intelligent and thoughtful men in German politics. A lot of Christian Democrats believed that their only chance of beating Schröder lay with Schäuble, and, in fact, when Kohl called him "my successor" they took it for granted that he would be the next candidate. It's possible that Kohl did, too, since when he announced his own candidacy, late last year, he did it almost as an aside, in the middle of an interview about something else, and without telling anybody—not even Schäuble—first.

Schäuble is paralyzed. He was shot in the back by a psychopath in 1990, six months after the attack on Lafontaine, and Kohl is said to have sat by his hospital bed, weeping, while the doctors tried to save his life. It was a long, anguishing recovery for a vigorous, good-looking man who had had every hope of becoming the next German Chancellor. The odds were against his even being able to speak again, let alone walk, but today he is the Christian Democratic whip, and he is beginning to make small jokes about his handicap—about how to roll properly down a red carpet, or about what happens if the brakes on your wheelchair fail at the Bundestag door and you go careering to the front of the hall, where the Greens are presumably waiting with a speeding ticket. He never complains about how difficult his life is now, and he certainly never complains about the Chancellor. Some people say that the attack has left him bitter—that he expects nothing, and that this is why he said nothing when Kohl declared—but his friends say that it has made him wry and tolerant, and his Catholic politics, if anything, more progressive and humane.

Schäuble told me that he doesn't like the idea of a grand coalition. He thinks that it would strengthen "the fringe parties"—he means the Communists and the cluster of parties on the far right—because it wouldn't be able to incorporate and contain the extremes of either of the big parties, which he calls "the people's parties." Part of him wants the Christian Democrats to go into opposition. His one argument with Kohl may be that Kohl can't really accept the prospect, while Schäuble thinks that a few years out of power could be a kind of renewal, and buy the Party time to "stabilize our electorate"—to reclaim the voters Kohl has lost and, presumably, to attract some new ones once Kohl is more or less out of the picture. He said to remember that the Christian Democrats have been just as successful as the Greens at recruiting young Germans. He feels closer to more Greens than to almost any Social Democrat. He doesn't want to be Schröder's Vice-Chancellor, any more than Schröder wants to give him a job with so much authority and exposure. Schäuble's view of Schröder is this: "Let him make his mistakes without us."

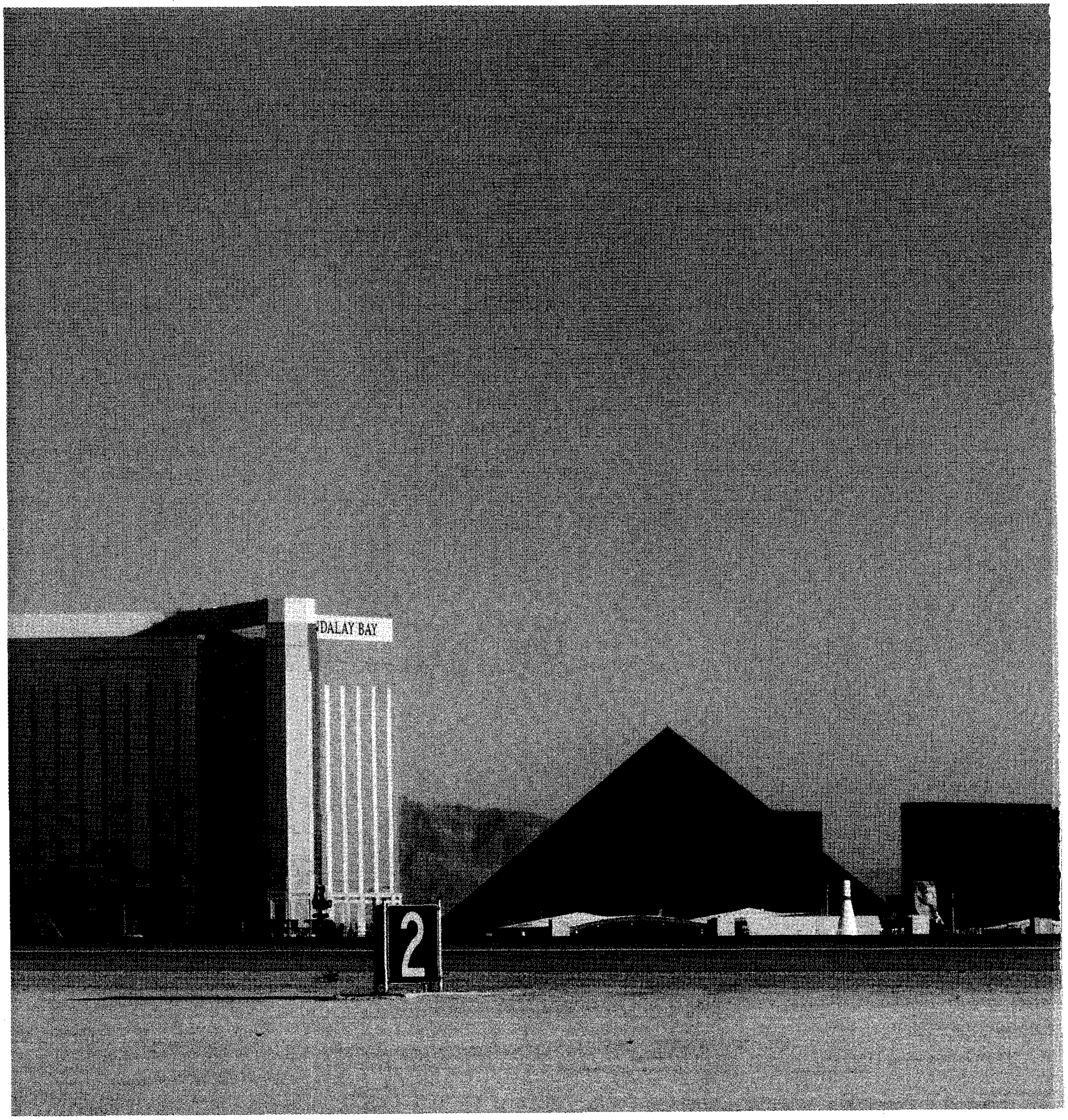
TWO weeks ago, Kohl began to bargain with Germany. The word spread that if Germany voted for him he would step down after a year or two and give the job to Schäuble. Kohl denies it, but the suggestion hangs there, and may well turn out to have been the ploy that let him keep the job for himself. People here call him "Mr. Eternity." Spiros Simitis puts it this way: "He's one of the patriarchs—Churchill, Adenauer, de Gaulle, and now Kohl—who missed the moment when they could have left as gods."

A lot could change here by September 27th. The crisis in Russia has already sent Germany's financial markets into a tailspin, and although this hurts Kohl, it could also persuade the Germans to vote, with caution, for someone they know better than they know the Premier of Lower Saxony. The crisis in the eastern states—where Kohl is booed and picketed whenever he tries to make a speech—could conceivably backfire on Schröder, too, since he counts on votes there that could go to the Communists now, the way Kohl counts on votes that could go to right-wing parties like the German People's Union, which earlier this year won thirteen per cent of the vote in an eastern state election.

But the greatest problem for Schröder in the next two weeks will be how to address the question of who he is, what he thinks, and how he plans to run Germany. The best leaders have plans *and* visions, and Schröder will not admit to having either. When I asked him about immigrants, that day at the restaurant, he told me a nice little story about his daughter, who loves New York and wants to be American *and* German; he thinks she should have the right to carry two passports, and probably I do, too, but surely the passport problems of a little girl whose stepfather is planning to move her into the German Chancellery are not the passport problems of a Turkish worker or a Bosnian refugee in a holding camp, and they have nothing at all to do with the question that most liberal Germans raise—namely, why Germany persists in being one of the only democracies in Europe that refuses to grant, even provisionally, the right to citizenship by birth. On the other hand, some of the things Schröder says are so obvious that people tend to dismiss them. He raised a storm last spring by suggesting that Germany's special relationship with France be extended to include the British. When I asked him why, he said, "Blair's government is really trying to integrate into Europe, so it's important to try to help it—that's my position." It was a simple position, and he may be right.

The anthropologist Karl-Heinz Kohl (who is not a relative of the Chancellor) believes that Schröder's problem is the problem of a generation. He told me to think back to the seventies, when everyone Schröder's age was twenty years younger and a rebel: "We were all in the debate, we were against what we called the dominating discourse. And the problem now, of course, is that *we're* the dominating discourse, and it's very difficult to find what to be against. Maybe Schröder did it—turned right, into that New Middle—a couple of years before the rest of Germany. Maybe he couldn't find an identity of 'against' anymore, and it made him hysterical." What the professor was saying is that, for better or for worse, Gerhard Schröder is a modern German of fifty-four. ♦

"I loved your E-mail, but I thought you'd be older."

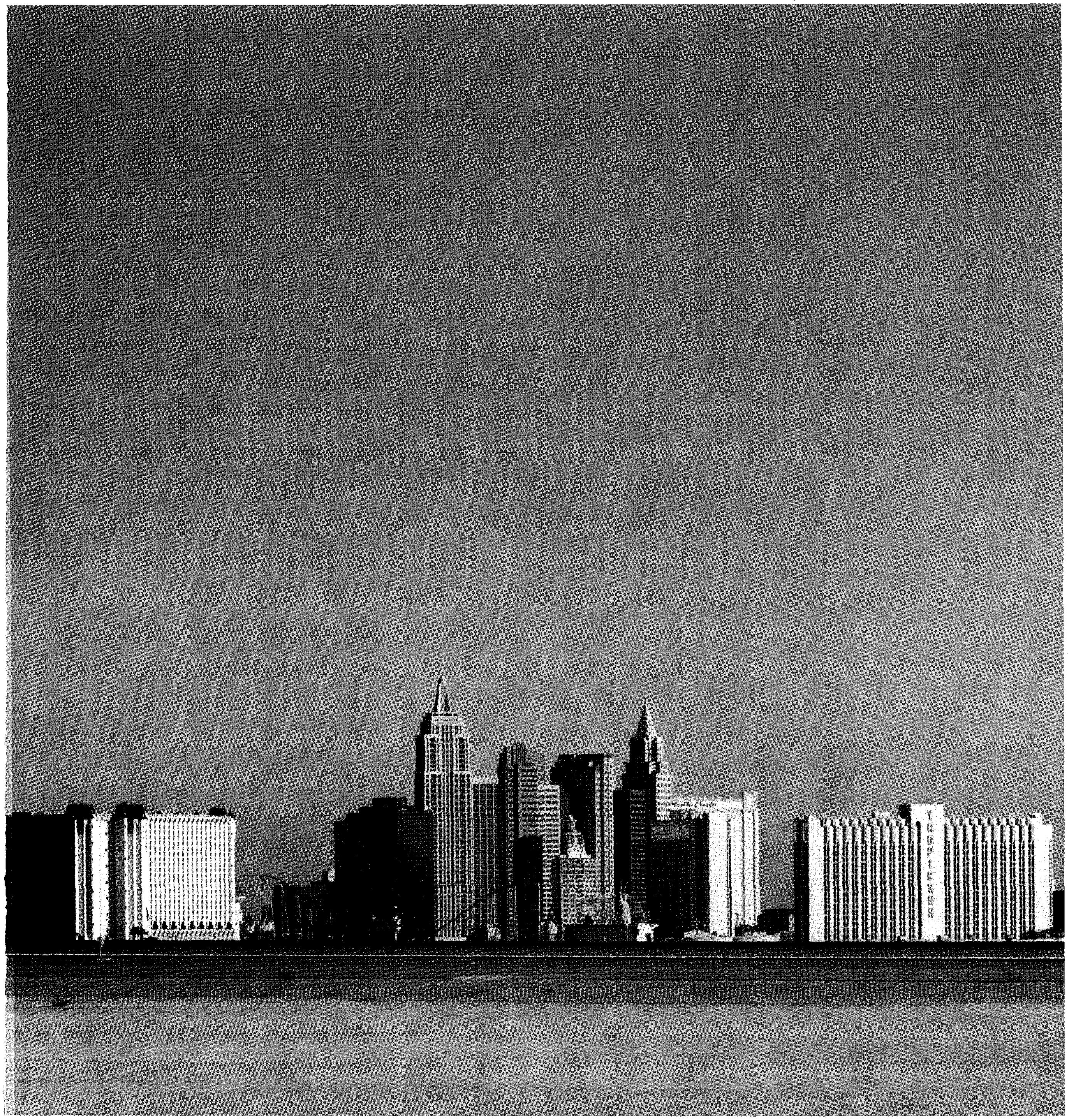


THE SKY LINE

CASINOS ROYALE

Las Vegas's huge new hotels with pseudo-Euro themes are aeons away from Bugsy Siegel's fantasy of high rolling in the desert. What happened to trash and tawdry pleasures?

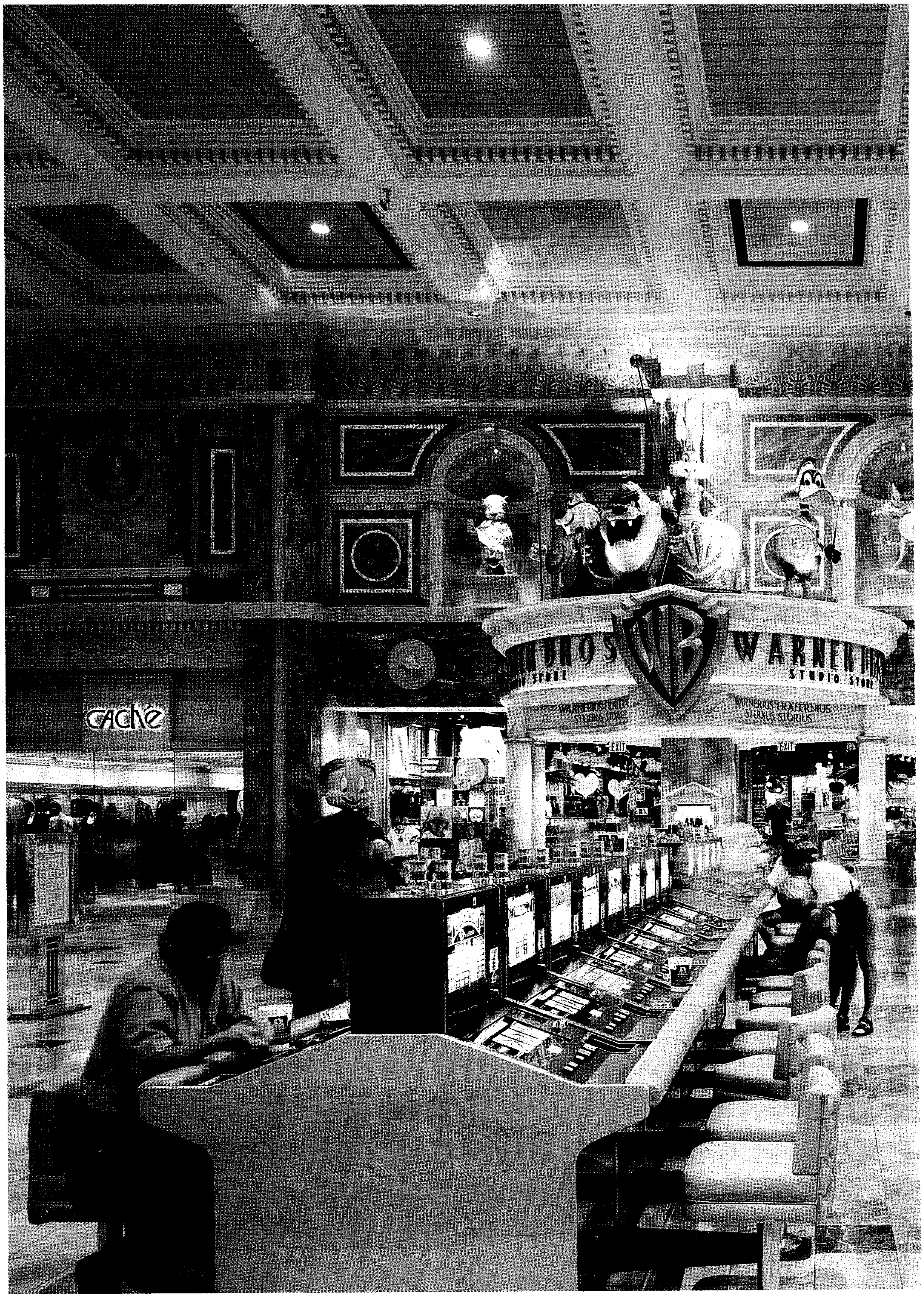
BY PAUL GOLDBERGER/PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROBERT POLIDORI



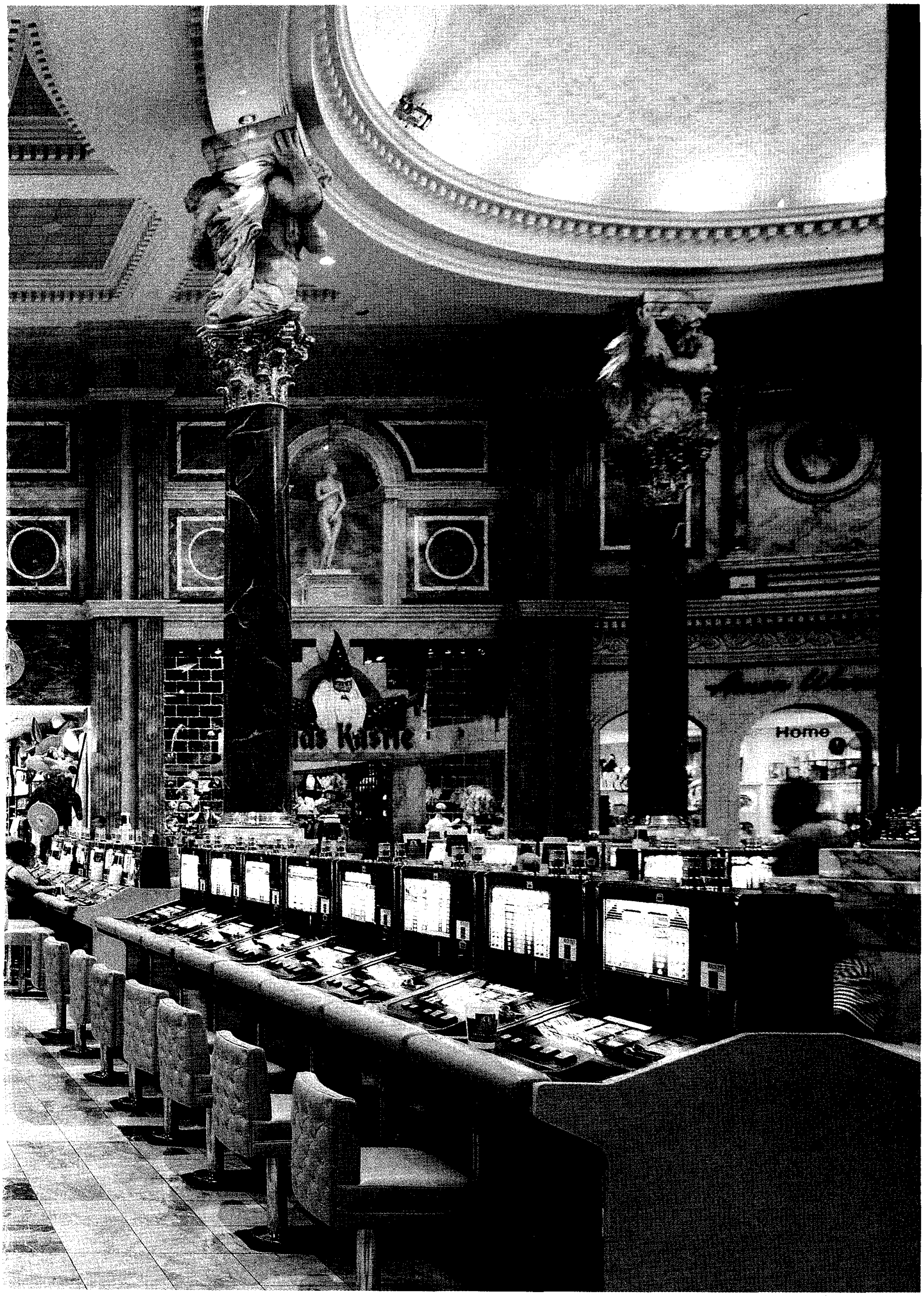
LAS VEGAS was built on the premise that the degree to which people loosen their wallets is in direct proportion to the amount of fantasy that is offered to them. In other words, the less the city looks like home, the more money visitors will spend. This notion depends on ignoring one of the essential qualities of most successful cities. Continuity, usually a source of joy and comfort, is counterproductive in Las Vegas, where this year's bedazzlement is next year's snooze. Keeping the city going takes ever-increasing doses of invention.

Once, years ago, neon was enough to do the job. As Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour observed in 1972, when they wrote "Learning from Las Vegas," the signs were more important than any of the buildings. But the city that Venturi, Scott Brown, and Izenour studied—and, to a certain extent, romanticized—hasn't existed for years. It was a victim of its own success. Now the buildings are more important than the signs, although they aren't nearly as sexy. The new measure of success is size. Several hotels nearing com-

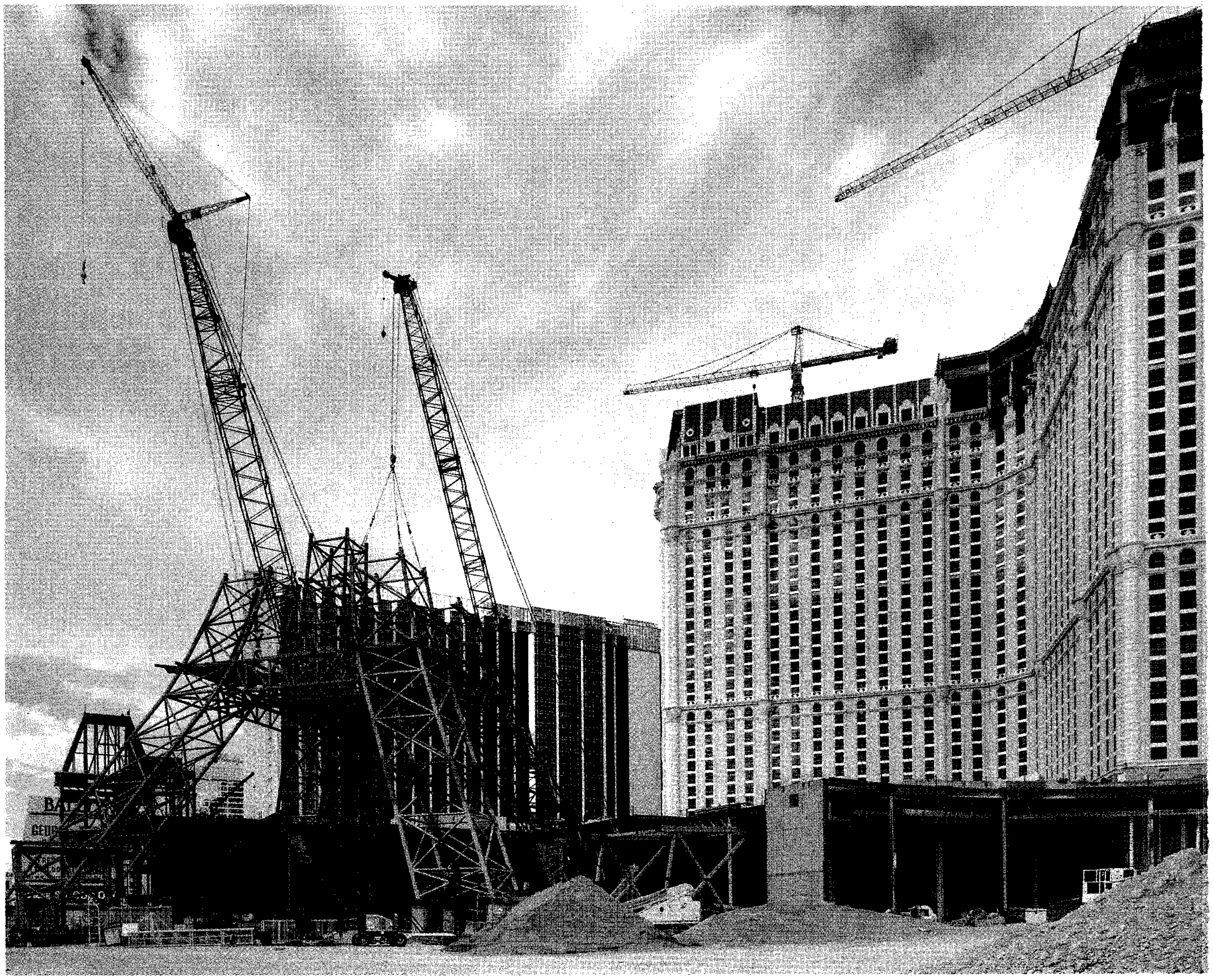
The Las Vegas Strip has marched steadily from downtown to the very edge of the airport.


CACHé
WARNER BROS
STUDIO STORE
WARNERIUS FRATERNIUS
STUDIUS STORIUS
EXIT

The Forum at Caesars Palace has taken the American shopping mall to a new level of architectural extravagance. Busts of Ron



perors preside over lines of slot machines and retail stores in a space that leads from the casino to lavish atriums with more shops.



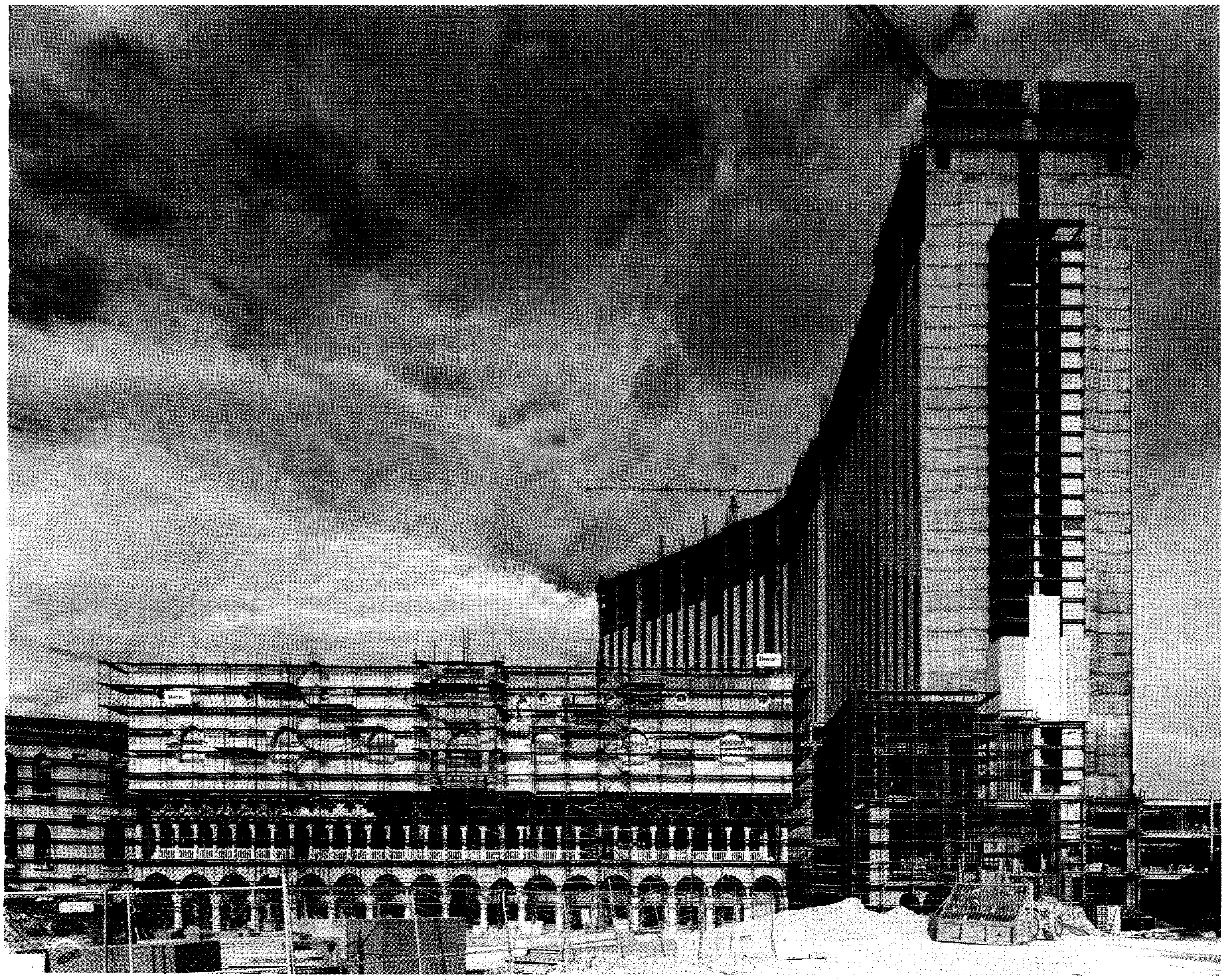
A replica of the Eiffel Tower, roughly half the size of the real thing, will serve as the entryway to the Paris–Las Vegas.

pletion in Las Vegas are so big that three thousand rooms constitutes a medium-sized establishment. The MGM Grand, which is currently the biggest place in town, has five thousand rooms and is expanding. When the latest wave of construction is finished, the Strip will look less like the Las Vegas of old than like Wilshire Boulevard on steroids.

The creators of the new hotels are high on ersatz versions of European culture. The imagery of choice is no longer the Wild West, gambling, and naughtiness. The Sands is gone, and so is the Aladdin. The coming months will bring the Paris, the Venetian, and the Bellagio, which has a two-hundred-and-ninety-five-million-dollar art collection containing works by Van Gogh, Renoir, and Picasso. The Venetian's owner, Sheldon Adelson, says that he chose the theme for his six-thousand-room hotel because his wife found Venice "enchanting." That's a long way from what Bugsy Siegel was thinking about when he named the Flamingo. The Paris will have a fifty-story-high replica of the Eiffel Tower in its front yard, and the Venetian will be enhanced by replicas of the Doges' Palace and St. Mark's tower, and Las Vegas's very own Rialto Bridge, which crosses a six-lane automobile entrance. (It is not entirely clear how this fits in with Adelson's claim that he is "not going to build a 'faux' Venice. We're going to build what is essentially the *real* Venice.")

Every one of the new hotels has become an attraction for visitors on its own terms, and not just a mecca for gamblers who detest the sun. The popularity of the buildings has created what is surely the most bizarre and wonderful thing about Las Vegas right now: the way in which it has begun, almost inadvertently, to function like a real city. The urbanism of Las Vegas is perverse, for it blossoms most where it should not exist at all, on the Strip, an eight-lane boulevard that shoots southward from the edge of the city's old downtown and is filled with casino hotels all the way to the airport, a distance of more than four miles. The Strip emerged in the postwar years, but its buildings weren't much more than glorified motels until the nineteen-seventies, when the first of the mega-hotels, the original MGM Grand, went up.

While the big hotels would seem to be entirely oriented to the automobile—and most of them are brilliantly designed to swallow and disgorge hundreds of cars an hour—each of them has also become a kind of node in



The new Venetian will be accessorized with the Doges' Palace and St. Mark's tower and an ersatz Rialto Bridge.

the new urban experience of Las Vegas, one of the stations along the Via Striperosa. The Strip is full of people walking. They throng the sidewalks at all hours, marching from hotel to hotel, having figured out that if you want to see the MGM Grand and the Tropicana and the Luxor and the Monte Carlo then there is no reason to get in your car each time just to move it one location down the Monopoly board. It is much smarter to use your feet. There are pedestrian bridges over the Strip to accommodate the huge crowds, complete with elevators to assure that the disabled are not excluded from the total urban experience.

Unlike the experience of Disneyland, to which it is sometimes compared, the new urbanism of Las Vegas is free. It is right out there, on the street, for all to partake in. Every night, huge crowds gather to see the pirate ships in front of the Treasure Island hotel and casino engage in battle, and the volcano in front of the Mirage, next door, erupt, and after that the crowds surge back and forth, seeking entertainment wherever they can find it. In all likelihood, most of the people who come to Las Vegas are unaccustomed to thinking of cities as a source of entertainment, and the notion that walking along a crowded street can be exciting in itself is probably new to them. Urban activity for most people in this country occurs in private, enclosed places, like malls and atriums, and, while in one sense Las Vegas represents the absolute triumph of the private realm—these casino hotels aren't exactly efforts at public enterprise—it ends up staking an odd claim for the public realm.

It is only on the Strip that Las Vegas's weird and powerful urbanism exists fully. The city's rapidly growing suburban residential areas, with acre upon acre of Mediterranean-Deco-Baroque villas crammed one next to the other, are indistinguishable from Orange County. (A lot of Las Vegas, once you get away from the casinos, is indistinguishable from Orange County.) The old downtown, where locals and less-well-heeled tourists mix, struggles along, its seedy motels and wedding chapels still dominating the landscape. A handful of people walk along the sidewalks, their number only slightly increased by the completion, nearly three years ago, of something called the Fremont Street Experience, a metal vault that has turned the main drag into a pedestrian mall with a light show. But on the Strip, which Venturi, Scott

Brown, and Izenour said existed only to be viewed from a moving automobile, one can see how much has changed since the nineteen-seventies. The buildings are hardly cheek by jowl, as in a conventional city, but the scourge of suburban sprawl, those vast, oppressive seas of parked cars, does not exist, since all the large hotels provide parking garages and limit grade-level parking to a tiny number of cars. Now even shopping malls are integrated into the quasi-urban casino-hotel complex. The best of them, the spectacular Forum at Caesars Palace, with its plethora of outrageous, overdone Roman detailing, is the most striking architectural solution to the vexing problem of the shopping mall anywhere in America. (It's amazing what a few columns, some statuary, some fountains, and some audio-animatronic figures can do for the shopping experience—not to mention a few slot machines.)

LAS VEGAS has always embraced the new with more passion than any other city; it also rejects its past more decisively. Obsolete hotels in Las Vegas don't get restored, they get blown up—"imploded," in the local jargon. Architecture, like cash, is easy come, easy go. Old signs may be preserved in a junk yard at the edge of town, but buildings just disappear. The local landmarks commission doesn't have much to do on the Strip.

The new architecture, for all its aspirations to grandeur, has little of the panache of the old. It is bigger but also thinner, and less sure of itself. Most of the new buildings are not much more than prettied-up Y-shaped skyscraper slabs, and collectively they can look disturbingly like the skyline of Bucharest. The new Las Vegas is less the Emerald City than Co-Op City with a mansard roof. The theme-park appliqué on these huge places—the Eiffel Tower in front of the Paris, the reference to Monegasque grandeur at the Monte Carlo—represents something of a toning down. A few years ago, when the city began its evolution into a so-called family resort, the most striking new hotels were the ones in which not just a few details but the whole building became a kind of play object. There was the Excalibur, a medieval castle; the Luxor, a pyramid of black glass with a massive sphinx as a porte-cochère; and New York-New York, a knockoff of the whole Big Apple skyline that seemed designed to serve as the backdrop for a production of "On the Town" for a cast of giants. But New York-New York is almost two years old, and the new generation of architecture is influenced by a municipal craving for respectability that you cannot get from make-believe Chrysler Buildings and fake sphinxes. The citizens of Las Vegas brought in Antoine Predock, the New Mexico architect, to design a library and children's museum, and Clark County just celebrated the completion of a county office building of red sandstone by the Denver architect Curt W. Fentress that is one of the most serious government buildings constructed anywhere in the last few years. Not long ago, it would have looked ridiculous next to all the neon signs and funny-shaped buildings on the Strip, but today, as the hotels become more conventional themselves, or at least more representative of a kind of bourgeois yearning, the county building's earnest, desert-style modernism is a natural emblem of the city.

Las Vegas is striving to go mainstream, but it is still addicted to fantasy, and these conflicting impulses have to be resolved. The city plunders the past with an exquisite combination of naïveté and cynicism; its buildings are the architectural equivalent of the sentimental gangster, yearning for respectability. One is tempted to say that the mixture of desires is no different from what Henry Clay Frick felt when he built a French Renaissance mansion on Fifth Avenue. But, of course, it is different, because Las Vegas represents culture for the masses; unlike Frick or the Vanderbilts, who built their castles to proclaim their distance from everyone else, Las Vegas aspires to push democracy farther. The only reason the new hotels exist is to have crowds swarming through them. The aristocracy here, such as it is, lives far from the center of town, behind locked gates. The heart of Las Vegas belongs to the new skyline—brash, glib, strangely banal, and urban in spite of itself. ◆

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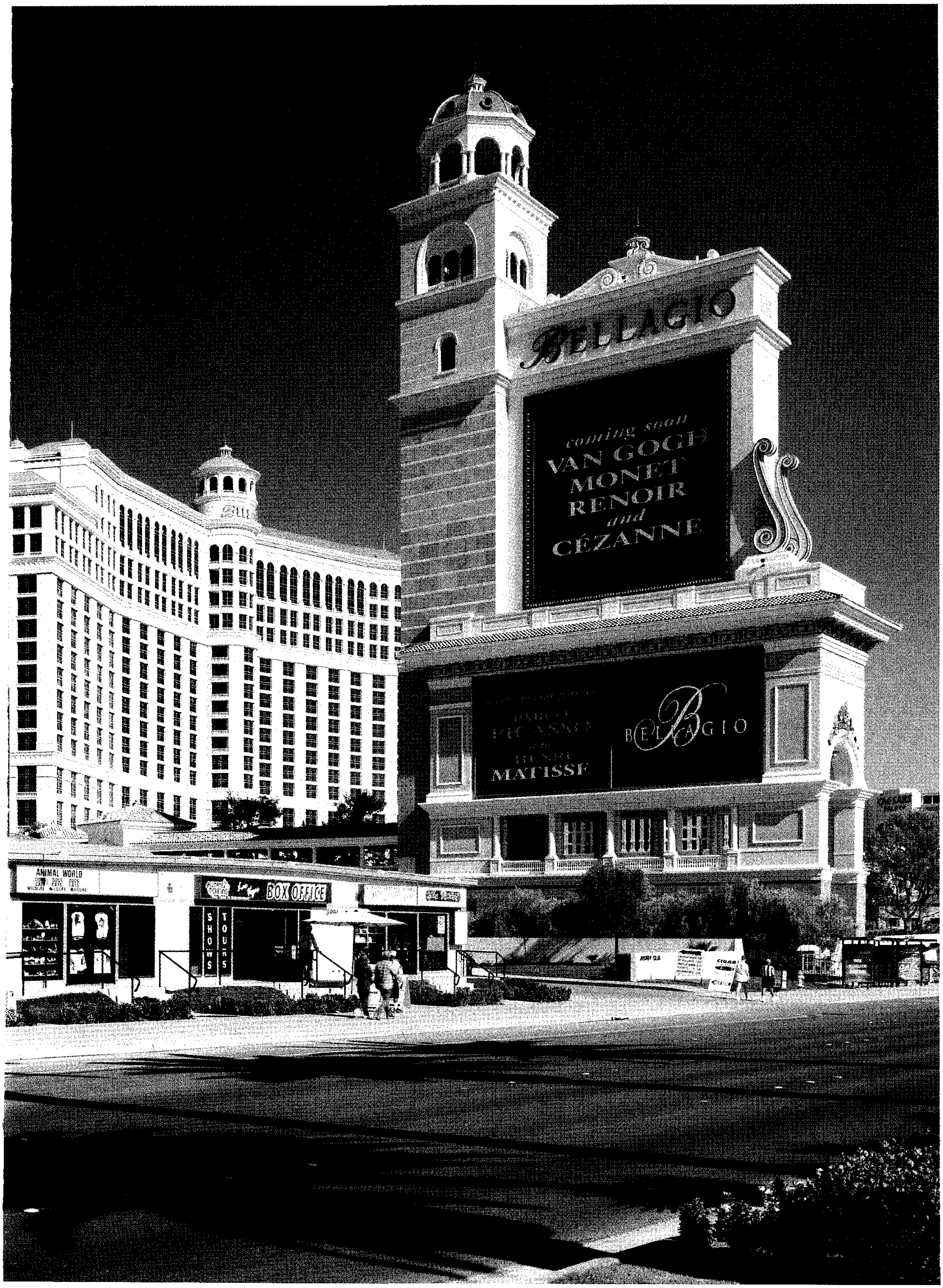
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FICTION

WHO'S IRISH?

An American education.

BY GISH JEN

In China people say mixed children are supposed to be smart, and definitely my granddaughter Sophie is smart. But Sophie is wild, Sophie is not like my daughter, Natalie, or like me. I am work hard my whole life, and fierce besides. My husband always used to say he is afraid of me, and in our restaurant busboys and cooks all afraid of me, too. Even the gang members come for protection money, they try to talk to my husband. When I am there, they stay away. If they come by mistake, they pretend they are come to eat. They hide behind the menu, they order a lot of food. They talk about their mothers. Oh, my mother have some arthritis, need to take herbal medicine, they say. Oh, my mother getting old, her hair all white now.

I say, Your mother's hair used to be white, but since she dye it, it is black again. Why don't you go home once in a while and take a look? I tell them, Confucius says a filial son knows what color his mother's hair is.

My daughter is fierce, too, she is vice-president in the bank now. Her new house is big enough for everybody to have their own room, including me. But Sophie take after Natalie's husband's family, their name is Shea. Irish. I always thought Irish people are like the Chinese, work so hard on the railroad, but now I know why the Chinese beat the Irish. Of course, not all Irish are like the Shea family, of course not. My daughter says I should not say the Irish this, the Irish that.

How do you like it when people say the Chinese this, the Chinese that, she says.

You know, the British call the Irish heathen, just like they call the Chinese, she says.

You think the Opium War was bad, how would you like to live right next door to the British, she says.

And that is that. My daughter has a funny habit when she win an argument, she take a sip of something and look away, so the other person is not embarrassed. So I am not embarrassed. I do not call anybody anything, either. I just happen to mention about the Shea family, an interesting fact: four brothers in the family, and not one of them work. The mother, Bess, has a job before she got sick, she was executive secretary in a big company. She is handle everything for a big shot, you would be surprised how complicated her job is, not just type this, type that. Now she is a nice woman with a clean house. But her boys, every one of them is on welfare, or so-called severance pay, or so-called disability pay. Something. They say they cannot find any work, this is not the economy of the fifties, but I say, Even the black people doing better these days, some of them live so fancy, you'd be surprised. Why the Shea family have so much trouble? They are white people, they speak English. When I come to this country, I have no money and do not speak English. But my husband and I own our restaurant before he die. Free and clear, no mortgage. Of course, I understand I am just lucky, come from a country where the food is popular all over the world. I understand it is not the Shea family's fault they come from a country where everything is boiled. Still, I say.

She's right, we should broaden our horizons, says one brother, Jim, at Thanksgiving. Forget about the car business. Think about egg rolls.

Pad thai, says another brother, Mike. I'm going to make my fortune in pad thai. It's going to be the new pizza.

I say, You people too picky about what you sell. Selling egg rolls not good enough for you, but at least my husband and I can say, We made it. What can you say? Tell me. What can you say?

Everybody chew their tough turkey.

I especially cannot understand my daughter's husband, John, who has no job but cannot take care of Sophie, either. Because he is a man, he says, and that's the end of the sentence.

Plain boiled food, plain boiled thinking. Even his name is plain boiled: John. Maybe because I grew up with black-bean sauce and hoisin sauce and garlic sauce, I always feel something is missing when my son-in-law talk.

But, O.K.: so my son-in-law can be man, I am babysitter. Six hours a day, same as the old sitter, crazy Amy, who quit. This is not so easy, now that I am sixty-eight, Chinese age almost seventy. Still, I try. In China, daughter take care of mother. Here it is the other way around. Mother help daughter, mother ask, Anything else I can do? Otherwise daughter complain mother is not supportive. I tell my daughter, We do not have this word in Chinese, supportive. But my daughter too busy to listen, she has to go to meeting, she has to write memo while her husband go to the gym to be a man. My daughter says otherwise he will be depressed. Seems like all his life he has this trouble, depression.

No one wants to hire someone who is depressed, she says. It is important for him to keep his spirits up.

Beautiful wife, beautiful daughter, beautiful house, oven can clean itself automatically. No money left over, because only one income, but lucky enough, got the babysitter for free. If John lived in China, he would be very happy. But he is not happy. Even at the gym things go wrong. One day he pull a muscle. Another day, weight room too crowded. Always something.

Until finally, hooray, he has a job. Then he feel pressure.

I need to concentrate, he says. I need to focus.

He is going to work for insurance company. Salesman job. A paycheck, he says, and at least he will wear clothes in-

FILIP PAGOWSKI

stead of gym shorts. My daughter buy him some special candy bars from the health-food store. They say THINK! on them, and are supposed to help John think.

John is a good-looking boy, you have to say that, especially now that he shave so you can see his face.

I am an old man in a young man's game, says John.

I will need a new suit, says John.

This time I am not going to shoot myself in the foot, says John.

Good, I say.

She means to be supportive, my daughter says. Don't start the send-her-back-to-China thing because we can't.

SOPHIE is three years old American age, but already I see her nice Chinese side swallowed up by her wild Shea side. She looks like mostly Chinese. Beautiful black hair, beautiful black eyes. Nose perfect size, not so flat looks like something fell down, not so large looks like some big deal got stuck in wrong face. Everything just right, only her skin is a brown surprise to John's family. So brown, they say. Even John says it. She never goes in the sun, still she is that color, he says. Brown. They say, Nothing the matter with brown, they are just surprised. So brown. Nattie is not that brown, they say. They say, It seems like Sophie should be a color in between Nattie and John. Seems funny, a girl named Sophie Shea be brown. But she is brown, maybe her name should be Sophie Brown. Nothing the matter with brown, they are just surprised.

The Shea family talk is like this sometimes, going around and around like a Christmas-tree train.

Maybe John is not her father, I say one day, to stop the train. And sure enough, train wreck. None of the brothers ever say the word brown to me again.

Instead John's mother, Bess, says, I hope you are not offended.

She says, I did my best on those boys. But raising four boys with no father is no picnic.

You have a beautiful family, I say.

I'm getting old, she says.

You deserve a rest, I say. Too many boys make you old.

I never had a daughter, she says. You have a daughter.

I have a daughter, I say. The Chinese don't think a daughter is so great, but you're right. I have a daughter.

I never was against the marriage, you know, she says. I never thought John was marrying down. I always thought Nattie was just as good as white.

I was never against the marriage either, I say. I just wonder if they look at the whole problem.

Because of the whole problem, she sighs.

Exactly, I say.

Of course, you pointed out the problem, you are a mother, she says. And now we both have a granddaughter. A little brown granddaughter, she is so precious to me.

I laugh. A little brown granddaughter, I say. To tell you the truth, I don't know how she came out so brown.

We laugh some more. These days Bess need a walker to walk. She take so many pills she need two glasses of water to get them all down. Her favorite TV show is all about bloopers, and she love her bird feeder. All day long, she can watch that bird feeder, like a cat.

I can't wait for Sophie to grow up, Bess says. I could use some female company.

Too many boys, I say.

Boys are fine, she says. But they do surround you after a while.

You should take a break, come live with us, I say. Lots of girls at our house.

Be careful what you offer, says Bess, with a wink. Where I come from, people mean for you to move in when they say a thing like that.

NOTHING the matter with Sophie's outside, that's the truth. It is inside that she is not like any Chinese girl I ever see. We go to the park, and this is what she does. She stand up in the stroller. She take off all her clothes and throw them in the fountain.

Sophie! I say. Stop!

But she just laugh like a crazy person. Before I take over as babysitter, Sophie has that crazy-person sitter, Amy the guitar player. My daughter thought this Amy very creative—another word we do not talk about in China. In China we talk about whether we have difficulty or no difficulty. We talk about whether life is bitter or not bitter. In America, all day long, people talk about creative, never mind that I cannot even look at this Amy, with her shirt so short that her belly button showing. This Amy think Sophie should love her body. So when Sophie take off her diaper, Amy laugh. When Sophie run around naked, Amy says she wouldn't want to wear a diaper, either. When Sophie go *shu-shu* in her lap, Amy laugh and says there are no germs in pee. When Sophie take off her shoes, Amy says bare feet is best, even the pediatrician says so. That is why Sophie now walk around with no shoes like a beggar child. Also why Sophie love to take off her clothes.

Turn around! say the boys in the park. Let's see that ass!

Of course, Sophie does not understand. Sophie clap her hands, I am the only one to say, No! This is not a game.

It has nothing to do with John's family, my daughter says. Amy was too permissive, that's all.

But I think if Sophie was not wild inside she would not take off her shoes and diaper to begin with.

You never take off your clothes when you were little, I say. All my Chinese friends had babies, I never saw one of them act wild like that.

Look, my daughter says. I have a big presentation tomorrow.

John and my daughter agree Sophie is a problem, but they don't know what to do.

You spank her, she'll stop, I say another day.

But they say, Oh, no. In America, parents not supposed to spank the child.

It gives them low self-esteem, my daughter says. And that leads to problems later, as I happen to know.

My daughter never have big presentation the next day when the subject of spanking come up.

I don't want you to touch Sophie, she says. No spanking, period.

Don't tell me what to do, I say.

I'm not telling you what to do, says my daughter. But I am telling you how I feel.

I am not your servant, I say. I am supportive. Don't you dare talk to me like that.

My daughter has another funny habit when she loses an argument. She spread out all her fingers and look at them, as if she like to make sure they are still there.

My daughter is fierce like me, but she and John think it is better to explain to Sophie that clothes are a good idea. This is not so hard in the cold weather. In the warm weather, it is very hard.

Use your words, my daughter

says. That's what we tell Sophie. How about you set a good example.

As if good example mean anything to Sophie. I am so fierce, the gang members who used to come to the restaurant all afraid of me, but Sophie is not afraid.

I say, Sophie, if you take off your clothes, no snack.

I say, Sophie, if you take off your clothes, no lunch.

I say, Sophie, if you take off your clothes, no park.

Pretty soon we are stay home all day, and by the end of six hours she still did not have one thing to eat. You never saw a child stubborn like that.

I'm hungry, she cry when my daughter come home.

What's the matter, doesn't your grandmother feed you? laugh my daughter.

No! Sophie says. She doesn't feed me anything!

My daughter laugh again. Here you go, she says.

She says to John, Sophie must be growing.

Growing like a weed, I say.

Still Sophie take off her clothes, until one day I spank her. Not too hard, but she cry and cry, and when I tell her if she doesn't put her clothes back on I'll spank her again, she put her clothes back on. Then I tell her she's a good girl, and give her some food to eat. The next day we go to the park, and, like a nice Chinese girl, she does not take off her clothes.

She stop taking off her clothes, I report. Finally!

How did you do it? my daughter ask.

After thirty-five years' experience with you, I guess I learn something, I say.

It must have been a phase, John says, and his voice is suddenly like an expert.

His voice is like an expert about everything these days, now that he carry a leather briefcase, and wear shiny shoes, and can go shopping for a new car. On the company, he says. The company will pay for it, but he will be able to drive it whenever he wants.

A free car, he says, how do you like that.

It's good to see you in the saddle again, my daughter says. Also she says, a little later, Some of your family patterns are scary.

At least I don't drink, he says. He says, And I'm not the only one with scary family patterns.

That's for sure, says my daughter.

EVERYONE is happy. Even I am happy, because there is more trouble with Sophie, but now I think I can help her Chinese side fight against her wild side. I teach her to eat food with a fork or spoon, she cannot just grab into the middle of a bowl of noodles. I teach her not to play with garbage cans. Sometimes I spank her, but not too often, and not too hard.

Still, there are problems. Sophie like to climb everything. If there is a railing, she is never next to it. Always she is on top of it. Also, Sophie like to hit the mommies of her friends. She learn this from her playground best friend, Sinbad, who is four. Sinbad wear Army clothes every day and like to ambush his mommy. He is the one who dug a big hole under the play structure, a foxhole he call it, all by himself. Very hardworking. Now he wait in the foxhole with a shovel full of wet sand, and when his mommy come he throw it right at her.

Oh, it's all right, his mommy says. You can't get rid of war games, it's part of their imaginative play. All the boys go through it.

Also, he like to kick his mommy, and one day he tell Sophie to kick his mommy, too.

I wish this story is not true.

Kick her, kick her! Sinbad says.

Sophie kick her. A little kick, as if she just happened to be swinging her little leg and didn't realize that big mommy leg was in the way. Still I spank Sophie and make Sophie say she is sorry, and what does the mommy say?

Really, it's all right, she says. It didn't hurt.

After that Sophie learn she can attack mommies in the playground, and some will say, Stop, but others will say, Oh, she didn't mean it, especially if they realize Sophie will be punished.

This is how, one day, bigger trouble come. The bigger trouble start when Sophie hide in the foxhole with that shovel full of sand. She wait, and when I come look for her she throw it at me. All over my nice clean clothes.

Did you ever see a Chinese girl act this way?

Sophie! I say. Come out of there, say you're sorry.

But she does not come out. Instead, she laugh. Naaah, naah-na, naah-naah, she says.

I am not exaggerate: millions of children in China, not one act like this.

Sophie! I say. Now! Come out now!

But she know she is in big trouble. She know if she come out what will happen next. So she does not come out. I am

YOUR GOOD INTENTIONS AT WORK

sixty-eight, Chinese age almost seventy, how can I crawl under there to catch her? Impossible. So I yell, yell, yell, and what happen? Nothing. A Chinese mother would help, but American mothers, they look at you, they shake their head, they go home. And, of course, a Chinese child would give up, but not Sophie.

I hate you! she yell. I hate you, Meanie!

Meanie is my new name these days.

Long time this goes on, long long time. The foxhole is deep, you cannot see too much, you don't know where is the bottom. You cannot hear too much, either. If she does not yell you cannot even know she is still there or not. After a while, getting cold out, getting dark out, there is no one left in the playground, only us.

Sophie, I say. How did you become stubborn like this? I am go home without you now.

I try to use a stick, chase her out of there, and once or twice I hit her, but still she does not come out. So finally I leave. I go outside the gate.

Bye-bye! I say. I'm go home now.

But still she does not come out and does not come out. Now it is dinnertime, the sky is black. I think I should maybe go get help, but how can I leave a little girl by herself in the playground? A bad man could come. A rat could come. I go back in to see what is happen to Sophie. What if she has a shovel and is making a tunnel to escape?

Sophie! I say.

No answer.

Sophie!

I don't know if she is alive, I don't know if she is fall asleep down there. If she is crying I cannot hear her.

So I take the stick and poke.

Sophie! I say. I promise I no hit you. If you come out, I give you a lollipop.

No answer. By now I worried, worried. What to do, what to do, what to do? I poke some more, even harder, so that I am poking and poking when my daughter and John suddenly appear.

What are you doing? What is going on? says my daughter.

Put down that stick! says my daughter.

You are crazy! says my daughter.

John wiggle under the structure, into the foxhole, to rescue Sophie.

She fell asleep, says John the expert. She's O.K. That is one big hole.

Now Sophie is crying and crying.

Sophie, my daughter says, hugging

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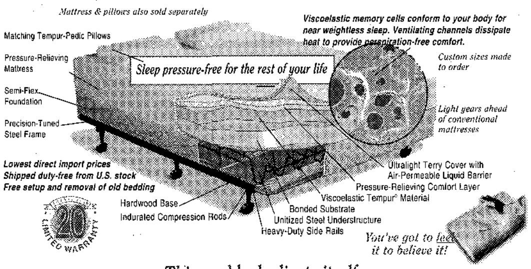
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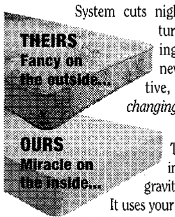
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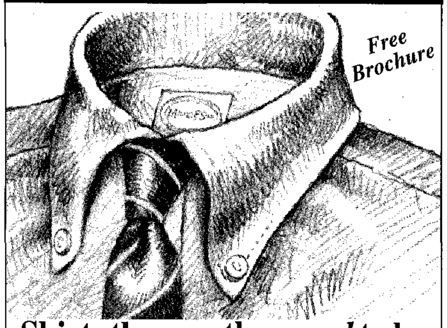

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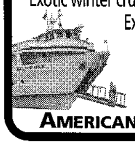

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her. Are you O.K., peanut? Are you O.K.?

She's just scared, says John.

Are you O.K.? I say, too. I don't know what happen, I say.

She's O.K., says John. He is not like my daughter, full of questions. He is full of answers until we get home and can see by the lamplight.

Will you look at her? he yell then. What the hell happened?

Bruises all over her brown skin, and a swollen-up eye.

You are crazy! says my daughter. Look at what you did! You are crazy!

I try very hard, I say.

How could you use a stick? I told you to use your words!

She is hard to handle, I say.

She's three years old! You cannot use a stick! says my daughter.

She is not like any Chinese girl I ever saw, I say.

I brush some sand off my clothes. Sophie's clothes are dirty, too, but at least she has her clothes on.

Has she done this before? ask my daughter. Has she hit you before?

She hits me all the time, Sophie says, eating ice cream.

Your family, says John.

Believe me, says my daughter.

A DAUGHTER I have, a beautiful daughter, I took care of her when she could not hold her head up. I took care of her before she could argue with me, when she was a little girl with two pigtails, one of them always crooked. I took care of her when suddenly we have to escape from China, I took care of her when suddenly we live in a country with cars everywhere, if you are not careful your little girl get run over. When my husband die, I promise him I will keep the family together, even though it was just two of us, hardly a family at all.

But now my daughter take me around to look at apartments. After all, I can cook, I can clean, there's no reason I cannot live by myself, all I need is a telephone. Of course, she is sorry. Sometimes she cry, I am the one to say everything will be O.K. She says she has no choice, she doesn't want to end up divorced. I say divorce is terrible, I don't know who invented this terrible idea. Instead of live with a telephone, though, surprise, I come to live with Bess. Imagine that. Bess make an offer and, sure enough, where she come from, people mean for you to move in when they say things like that. A crazy idea, go to live with someone else's family, but she like to have some female company, not like my daughter, who does not believe in company. These days when my daughter visit, she does not bring Sophie. Bess says we should give Nattie time, we will see Sophie again soon. But seems like my daughter have more presentation than ever before, every time she come, she have to leave.

I have a family to support, she says, and her voice is heavy, as if soaking wet. I have a young daughter and a depressed husband and no one to turn to.

When she says no one to turn to, she mean me.

These days my beautiful daughter is so tired she can just sit there in a chair and fall asleep. John lost his job again, already, but still they rather hire a babysitter than ask me to help, even though they can't afford it. Of course, the new babysitter is much younger, can run around. I don't know if Sophie these days is wild or not wild. She call me Meanie, but she like to kiss me, too, sometimes. I remember that every time I see a child on TV. Sophie like to grab my hair, a fistful in each hand, and then kiss me smack on the nose. I never see any other child kiss that way.

The satellite TV has so many channels, more channels than I can count, including a Chinese channel from the mainland and a Chinese channel from Taiwan, but most the time I watch bloopers with Bess. Also I watch the bird feeder—so many, many kinds of birds come. The Shea sons hang around all the time, asking when will I go home, but Bess tell them, Get lost.

She's a permanent resident, says Bess. She's not going anywhere.

Then she wink at me, and switch the channel with the remote control.

Of course, I shouldn't say the Irish this, the Irish that, especially now I am become honorary Irish myself, according to Bess. Me! Who's Irish, I say, and she laugh. All the same, if I could mention one thing about some of the Irish, not all of them of course, I like to mention this: their talk just stick. I don't know how Bess Shea learn to use her words, but sometimes I hear what she says a long time later. *Permanent resident. Not going anywhere.* Over and over I hear it, the voice of Bess. ♦

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A CRITIC AT LARGE

ANTS IN HIS PANTS

Preston Sturges brought a high style to low comedy.

BY ANTHONY LANE

PRESTON STURGES was born a hundred years ago, on August 29, 1898. It is hard to figure how this important anniversary should be celebrated. In New York, Film Forum has screened a season of his movies, and crowned it by arranging for Eddie Bracken—one of Sturges's favorite leading men, and now a hale seventy-eight—to be interviewed onstage. The Los Angeles County Museum of Art has just finished its own Sturges festival. For movie buffs, then, the angles are pretty well covered. For ordinary and less pallid members of the population, however, the question of the centenary is compounded by a more basic inquiry: Who, exactly, is Preston Sturges?

Well, he was a big fellow with the build of a boxer and a high lock of hair that flopped over his face. It was one of those square, readily amused, and suspiciously reassuring faces that you hardly see in public life anymore; Gable had one, and so did Hemingway. By trade, Sturges was a screenwriter who became a director. To us, that seems old hat, one of the paths by which the ambitious get to run their own show, but back in 1940, when "The Great McGinty" came out, it was very new hat indeed; the opening credits proclaimed "Written and directed by Preston Sturges," and it was the first time in the history of talkies that the two passive verbs had appeared together onscreen. From that conjunction sprang a whole tradition of filmmaking: literate, spiky, defensive, markedly personal, and almost always funny. One cannot say that without his example there would have been no Billy Wilder or Woody Allen, but it was Sturges who made the breakthrough. The fact that all three men use movies to caution us against the perils of overestimating human nature is, needless to say, sheer coincidence.

In the course of an eight-year spree, Sturges directed eleven features; in the first five years, he set off one of the most deafening fusillades that moviegoers have ever had to face. "The Great McGinty" and "Christmas in July" came out in 1940, "The Lady Eve" in 1941, "Sullivan's Travels" and "The Palm Beach Story" the year after that, and "The Miracle of Morgan's Creek" and "Hail the Conquering Hero" in 1944. These works occupy a curious position in the pantheon of cinema, if there is such a place. To anyone who knows his movies, they are not just entertaining; they are so obviously entertaining that only some vast, subterranean conspiracy can have stopped them from becoming as undyingly popular as "Some Like It Hot" or "Diner," or any of the other standbys that everyone has on video, and that are ideally watched on damp Sunday nights with a tub of Chunky Monkey. But the Sturges canon remains stubbornly half known; there are plenty of people who enjoy "The Lady Eve" without even realizing who made it.

Sturges's film stars Henry Fonda as Charles (Hopsie to his friends), a stiff-spined millionaire who fears women and collects snakes, and tries not to confuse the two. On board ship, Jean (Barbara Stanwyck), a professional cardsharp, slithers into his life and coils herself around his cash. The joke is that, against the form book, she finds herself falling for the sap. He discovers her true calling and spurns her, whereupon she retires hurt. Later, she returns to the fray, disguised as an English aristocrat named Eve, and humiliates Hopsie to such an excruciating extreme that, after a further switch of identity, she has no option but to fall for him all over again, and he for her. Put like that, it sounds muddled, not to say harebrained, but "The Lady Eve" is a model of clarity. What it happens to clarify is that people are liable to mislay their hearts as easily as their wallets, and—just in case you are tempted to construe such a loss as romantic—that both can be swiftly retrieved.

At one deep-breathing moment ("She fools with his ear," say the stage directions), Jean cuddles up to Charles and talks about her ideal man: "He's a little short guy with lots of money."

> CHARLES: I shouldn't think that kind of ideal was so difficult to find.
>
> JEAN: Oh, he isn't. . . . That's why he's my ideal . . . what's the sense of having one if you can't ever find him? Mine is a practical ideal you can find two or three of in every barber shop . . . getting the works.
>
> CHARLES: Why don't you marry one of them?
>
> JEAN (*almost indignantly*): Why should I marry anybody that looked like that?

And there, in a tough nutshell, you have Preston Sturges. Scenes like this are signed with his own verbal flourish, as easily recognized as a spat between Laurel and Hardy. It isn't just the way the lines knock back and forth, with each competitor trying to read the other's spin, or even Jean's mastery of the demotic, with its patina of homely detail. What singles it out as Sturges talk is the bewildering balance: on the one hand, a chin-up, all-American assumption that dreams are right there within reach, like apples; on the other, a slightly alien cynicism toward such rosiness, and a heavy hint that the fruit, once tasted, may prove not to have been worth the plucking. Capra comedies dwell on the gentle irony that the perfection you seek may have been sitting in your own home all along—and *that*, Sturges would contend, is the problem with perfection. His movies remain a bracing tonic against the sentimental; most of them were lapped up by audiences in the nineteen-forties, yet modern viewers, unschooled in the lean lessons of the Depression, are more wary of such knowledgeable comedy, as if it cut too close to the bone.

The nearest relative of "The Lady Eve" is "Bringing Up Baby," Howard Hawks's frontline report from the sex war. A number of props, narrative and physical, appear in both films: a large inheritance, a heroine who breaks a heel, a menace from the animal kingdom, desecrated evening wear, and, above all, a central clash between what Henry Adams used to call the virgin and the dynamo. This being screwball, of course, the virgin is a guy: tall, dark, handsome,

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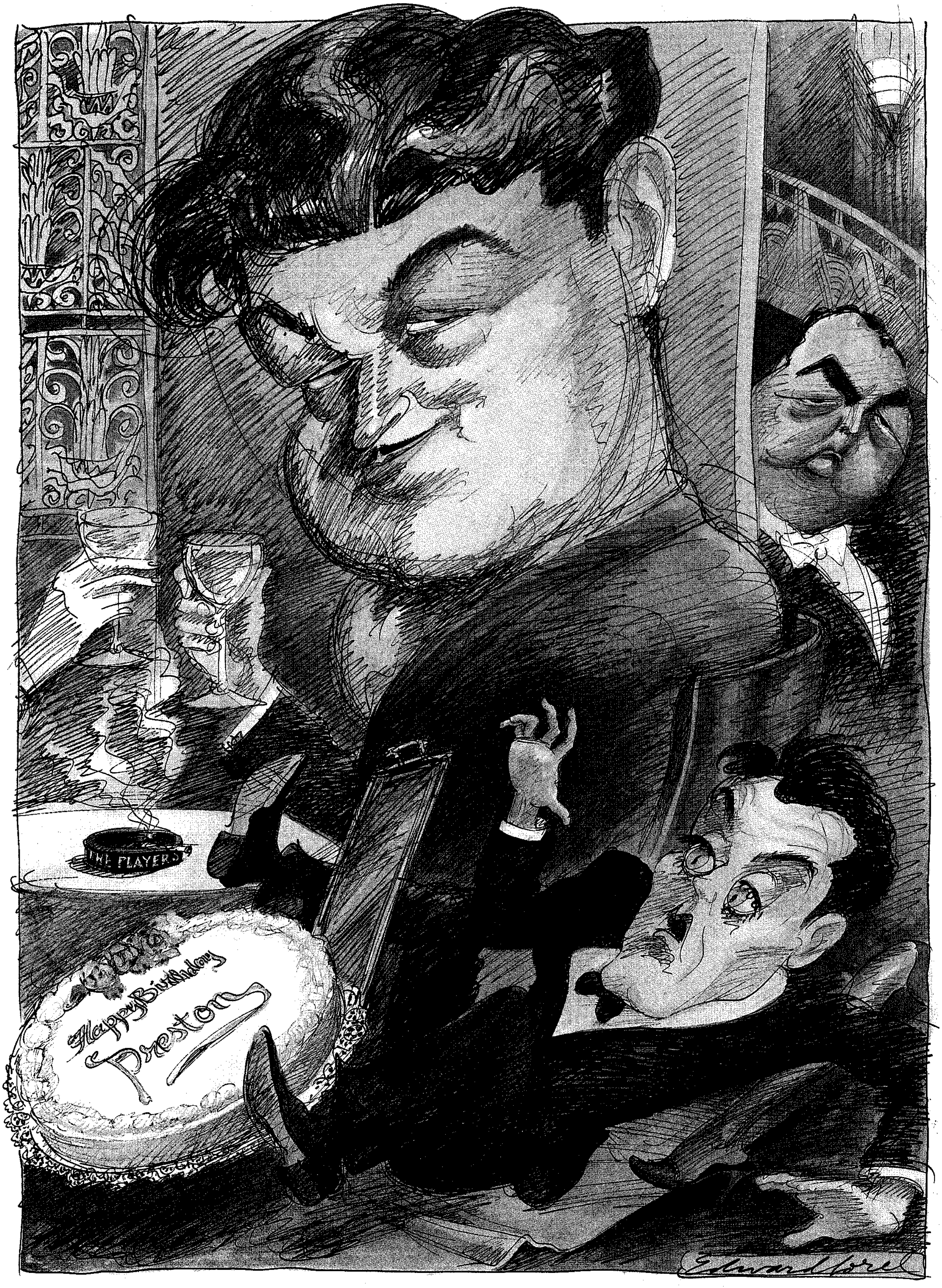
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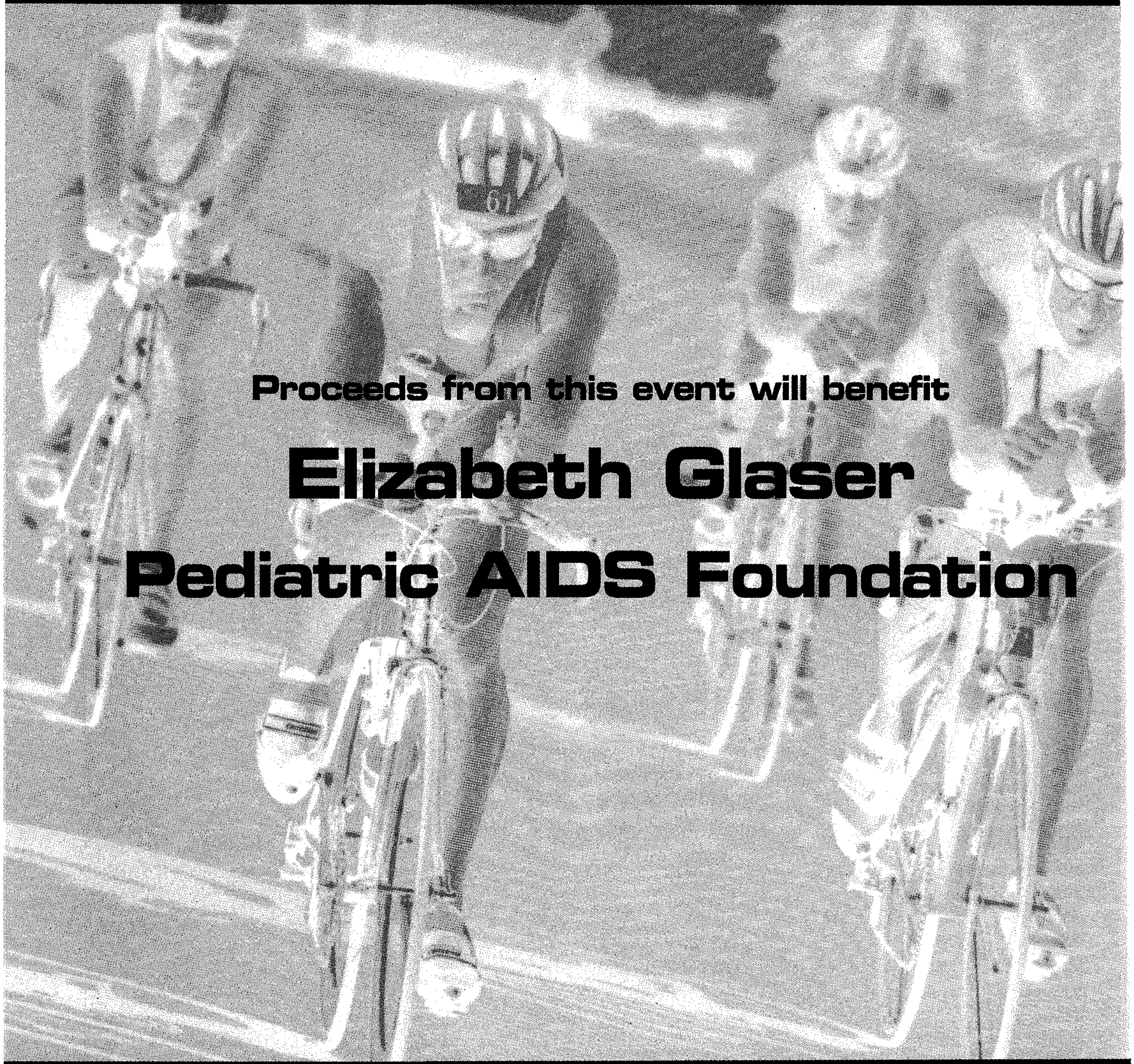

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For more information, call 818-707-8867 or visit the website at www.mesp.com and freeze-dried from the waist down. Fonda and Cary Grant are barely masculine until they mate with their respective predators—Stanwyck and Katharine Hepburn. Watch these two masterpieces side by side, and you feel that Hawks is summoning a dark fantasia, in which his creatures are touched (as if by a capricious moon) into the lunacy of love, whereas "The Lady Eve" is, even in its peaceable moments, knockabout stuff: like the rest of Sturges's movies, it acts on the assumption that people, as much as the objects around them, make excellent ninepins. Here is my rough list, in no particular order, of the things that Sturges found amusing:

1. Money.
2. Alcohol.
3. What you do with No. 1 when No. 2 gets hold of you.
4. And vice versa.
5. Running.
6. Falling over.
7. Fat people.
8. People in fancy clothes.
9. People who talk funny.
10. Politicians who get away with it.
11. Politicians who don't.
12. Prigs.
13. Patsies.
14. Coffee.
15. Marriage.
16. Gambling. (Note: Try not to confuse this with No. 15.)
17. Misunderstandings. (Note: Ditto.)
18. Mussolini.
19. Hitler.
20. A lion with its head in your lap.

Fired together, the prejudices of Preston Sturges constitute a broadside against the blandishments of an orderly life. It may be some comfort to learn that he practiced what he preached.

STURGES was born in Chicago, although, true to form, even his beginnings were misleading. He was christened Edmund Preston Biden. "Mr. Biden never sounded like much of a husband to me," Sturges wrote in his autobiography, "but it must be remembered that he was one of Mother's very first ones, and, like the celebrated Mrs. Simpson, she did better later." The marriage soon ended, and in 1901 his mother got married again—this time to a stockbroker called Solomon Sturges. One night in Illinois, when the boy was about eight, his parents woke him up and announced their separation. His mother asked which parent Preston would like to live with.

"I adored this big man," Sturges wrote. "The perfume of my father, a mixture of maleness and the best Havana cigars, was the breath of Araby to me. So without any hesitation at all I said, 'I want to stay here with Father.'

"And he said, 'I am not your father.' "

Whether the tale is true is beside the point. Sturges's memoirs—unfinished at his death, and smoothed into shape by his widow, Sandy—are so expert at socking us over the head with tall stories that to query their authenticity feels like an insult to the broad, boulevardier air with which Sturges passes himself off as a man of the world. No gust of bluffness, however, can disguise the fact that his films are peopled, to an alarming degree, by families that don't add up, and by couples who click together and then come apart like toys. The hero of "The Great McGinty" marries his secretary (who already has children of her own) purely because, as an aspirant political thug, he needs a mate. More startling is "The Palm Beach Story," in which Claudette Colbert runs out on her husband (Joel McCrea) even though her toes go all funny whenever he kisses her; she simply needs more money in her life, and that means somebody else. The movie starts and ends with the curlicued words "And they lived happily ever after" filling the screen, followed at once by the jaunty rider "*Or did they*?" At no point in a Sturges comedy does a happy family sit around being a happy family; you could read that as a psychotic reaction to his own precarious parentage, but I prefer to think that Sturges was so taken by the drama of his origins that he chose to milk it dry.

Mother and son were photographed together, rapturously manless, in 1899. She has a hand on her cocked hip, while Preston pulls her close; they grin and jut their matching chins, as if they had just signed a deal to map out the future of this one-year-old. When he grew up and wrote movies, he could barely stop himself from inventing characters whose prime desire was, in turn, to reinvent themselves, if necessary by pretending to be someone else. Whenever his plots needed a kick in the pants, Sturges could refer to the memory of his mother. Born Mary Dempsey, she considered the name cheap and became Mary d'Este Dempsey, in an effort, unusual among Chicago Catholics, to join the ranks of the Italian aristocracy. Later, she metamorphosed into Mary Desti and, lastly, into Madame Desti, which may have the aroma of a Coney Island palm reader but stood her in good stead when she grandly set up her own perfumery in Paris.

The main thing to know about Preston Sturges's mother is that she was best buddies with Isadora Duncan. She even gave Isadora the scarf that caught in the wheel of a car and snapped the famous neck. "When I look back over what I was exposed to as a child, I realize how extraordinarily lucky I was never to have become a (God forbid) male interpretive dancer with a wreath of gold laurel leaves around my head," Sturges wrote. It was not the most conventional of upbringings. Like a one-person demonstration of the complete works of Henry James, Sturges split his years, and his youthful consciousness, between Europe and America. Within a few pages, his memoirs lurch from sentences such as "Father is taking me to see Buffalo Bill and his Wonderful Wild West Show in the old Madison Square Garden" to a gruesome Wagnerfest in Bayreuth: "We also graced the lap of Frau Cosima, and the tenor Burgstaller's lap, and Humperdinck's lap, and Frau Thode's lap, and the laps of the King and Queen of Württemberg, and that of the Ab-Princess of Meiningen, the Kaiser's sister." If you ever wanted to know why Preston Sturges crammed his movies with folks named Bildocker, Hackensacker, Diddlebock, and Waggleberry, not to mention the beauteous Trudy Kockenlocker, there's your answer.

In 1944, James Agee wrote a fine essay, much mulled over by Sturges fans, on the divided soul of the director's films, which he described as "uncontrollably, almost proudly corrupt, vengeful, fearful of intactness and self-commitment . . . their mastering object, aside from success, seems to be to sail as steep into the wind as possible without for an instant incurring the disaster of becoming seriously, wholly acceptable as art. They seem to me, indeed, in much of their twisting, the elaborately counterpointed image of a neurosis." Agee makes you peer through Sturges's movies to the background beyond—to the steadying ethic of his stepfather and the dizzying pull of his mother, to the crazy conflict between Buffalo Bill and Bayreuth. Still, I don't understand why this should be plunged to the level of the neurotic; it is, after all, more than possible to lead—even to luxuriate in—a life of contradictions while retaining one's sanity, and anyone who isn't turned on by the sight of art sharing a bed with business shouldn't go into pictures. If you follow through the logic of Agee's claim, the Hollywood of the thirties and forties should have been so jagged with schizophrenia that nothing of value could conceivably have emerged. The fuel that drove Sturges was pretty much the mixture that swilled around inside Wilder and Lubitsch—a drop more Feydeau and a little less Schnitzler, presumably, but otherwise the same. When William Wyler (born in Alsace) and Sturges met at Universal in the thirties, they spoke in French.

It is true that Sturges wastes no opportunity, in his memoirs, to trash what he calls the "mandatory dose of exposure to great minds," but you can't sneer at the "allegedly hilarious comedies" of Molière without betraying the embarrassing fact that you are *au fait* with Molière. Men like Sturges, the sporty types who can read without moving their lips, have always played down the number of hours that they rack up in the library; how else can they expect to get the girls? The life of young Preston, as recounted by his biographers—among them James Curtis, Donald Spoto, and, the best and most recent, Diane Jacobs—seems to have covered an exhausting amount of ground. Educated in Paris and Lausanne, he was dispatched at fifteen to run a branch of Maison Desti at Deauville. With the outbreak of the First World War, he returned to America and another branch of the business; New Yorkers, like Parisians, flocked to buy his mother's celebrated Youth Lotion. (In Paris, home to every vice, it had been labelled Secret of the Harem.) Sturges went, in his own words, "*every* place: George Rector's, the Midnight Frolic over the Ziegfeld Follies, the Biltmore Roof, Delmonico's, Reisenweber's, Shanley's, and my favorite place of all, the Knickerbocker Grill." He joined the military, learned to fly (too late to see action), left as a second lieutenant in the Aviation Section of the Signal Corps, returned to New York, and invented the kiss-proof lipstick—Desti's Red Red Rouge.

This kind of life can easily continue, with minor detours, to the grave: the wealthy swell has half a job, too much fun, too many lovers, and the occasional brainstorm—Sturges, according to Diane Jacobs, came up with an idea for "bottling concentrated clam broth as a cocktail drink and calling it 'Pepoclam.'" He fell in love with a married woman named Estelle Godfrey, who, after her divorce, became the first of his four wives. (The second was Eleanor Hutton, the breakfast-cereal heiress.) So what turned the listless Preston Sturges into a hectically industrious writer? Who threw the switch? By his own account, it was a burst appendix at Christmas, 1927; he scraped close enough to death to crank up his life again. That sounds pat, but the fact remains that on July 13th of the following year his first play, "The Guinea Pig," opened at the Wharf Theatre, in Provincetown. His second, "Strictly Dishonorable," ran for more than five hundred performances at the Avon, in New York; by 1929, he was tinkering with movie scripts, and three years later he left for California. In 1933, he delivered "The Power and the Glory" to Jesse Lasky, a producer at Fox. Lasky had asked for a treatment, but Sturges had refused. Instead, he simply sent the final shooting script, which caused no end of consternation. It was word-perfect. "Imagine a producer accepting a script from an author and not being able to make *one change*," Lasky said. The film practically made itself, and Sturges collared a percentage of the gross.

By now, he was flying up the ladder, and the next rung was obvious. He wanted to direct his own movie, but nobody else at Paramount, where he arrived in 1936, was so enthusiastic. In recognition of the risk, he agreed to accept a one-dollar fee for his pains; this was later upped to a munificent ten bucks, for which Paramount got "The Great McGinty." McGinty is a bum who impresses the local boss by voting for him thirty-seven times in one evening; from there he ascends with Sturges-like ease and ends up governing the state; you could call it "Mr. Smith Screws Washington." Whether the Academy noticed this outrage is uncertain, but it gave Sturges an Oscar for Best Original Screenplay—the first such award. Never a man to let the moment subside, he promptly opened the Players, a three-story restaurant on Sunset Boulevard, across from the Chateau Marmont. It had a drive-in at the bottom and a tony French restaurant on the top; it boasted good bouillabaisse and a revolving bandstand. Sturges would make movies all day and then hit his own joint in the evening, hanging out with big names into the small hours. He had a new wife, the smart and luscious Louise Tevis. It is hard to imagine a time when Hollywood was more tightly packed with talent, or more redolent of fun. The life of Preston Sturges was going nicely. It was even better than Pepoclam.

THE films that Sturges made in the ensuing years are as classy as the milieux through which he strolled. Yet they are also roaringly unsnobbish; to Preston Sturges, the crucial thing about the class structure is not that it is morally offensive or, from the reactionary standpoint, a guarantee of social cohesion but precisely that it is a structure. You can clamber up and down it like a monkey in the rigging. "Don't I *look* like a picture director?" asks the imprisoned hero of "Sullivan's Travels." "To me you look kinda more like a soda jerk," says the fellow-inmate by his side. What emerges from that movie is the unadorned proposition that poverty is no picnic, though it can have its dignities, and that wealth is delicious, though it can rot the brain. The most compelling shots in the film are those of faces: whether we gaze at Veronica Lake, with her filthy little smile and that waterfall of hair, or at the tooth-

WATERS WORLD

One of these years, the director John Waters is going to receive an Academy Award for Lifetime Achievement in Good Bad Taste. His new film, "Pecker," opening September 25th, is the story of a boy and his favorite thing: his camera. Edward Furlong plays the wild-eyed eighteen-year-old, reminiscent of Waters at that age (minus the mustache), whose photography, to his family's astonishment, is taken up by the art world. Alongside Christina Ricci and Lili Taylor, Waters has cast some of the usual suspects—Mink Stole (of the Divine era) and Patricia Hearst ("Cry-Baby"). Waters' familiar obsessions—seafood, Catholic jokes, quack child psychology—are also in place, but the deepest pleasure for true fans will be in soaking up the director's beloved Baltimore: thrift shops, row houses, laundromats, and lawn ornaments. Waters shoots Baltimore the way Fellini shot Roma: he revels in it.

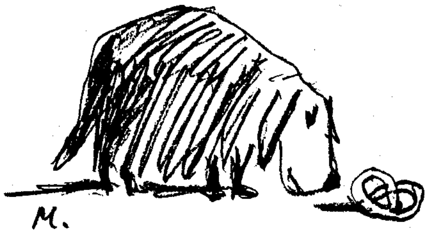
Photograph by Max Vadukul

less mug of a hobo, we are seeing them through the eyes—or the camera—of a man who was obsessed by what damage, or what favors, the farce of fortune could do to the human expression. Sturges kept a company of stock actors, some of them relicts of the stage or of silent movies, who crop up like faithful hounds in one film after another. It hoists your spirits just to see them: the lisping and lubricious Franklin Pangborn, the Jeevesian Robert Greig, the flustered fidget Jimmy Conlin, and William Demarest, the two-legged bulldog. Who in Hollywood these days is interested in the elderly or the corpulent, or in the radical possibility that age makes us not sadder but more comic—brimming with the sour yeast of a silly world?

It is worth stressing the visual habits of Sturges the director because it is all too easy to be overwhelmed by Sturges the writer. No one has ever written better for the movies, but the words do not compel our attention by floating free; Sturges wanted them to earn their keep, and that's why he had to direct. His educated fondness for the florid, and for the tumble that it takes when it bumps into slang, was there from his earliest stage plays, but onscreen it acquired a newly minted strangeness, as if there were secret rituals going on that the audience could only guess at. One of his later pictures, "The Sin of Harold Diddlebock"—made after Sturges had quit Paramount, in 1943, and teamed up with Howard Hughes—is a mixed bag, but it does sport one scene that rings with the old joy. Diddlebock (a born-again Harold Lloyd) is a teetotal clerk who loses his job, goes to a bar, and orders the first drink of his life. "You arouse the artist in me," declares the barman, scorning the suggestion of a Texas Tornado. "A Tornado is a perfectly reliable commercial drink," he says, "but *this* . . . this is almost . . . is the word *vestal*?" Well, if it wasn't the word before, it is now. Funnier if you did Latin in school, of course, but that's Sturges for you.

In my favorite part of my favorite Sturges film, "The Palm Beach Story," the lines of dialogue come close to cracking up entirely. Claudette Colbert is fleeing New York for Florida, by railroad; she hitches a ride as the mascot of the Ale and Quail Club, a collection of dubious gentlemen whose idea of a quiet evening is to get out their shotguns, load, and tell the steward to throw crackers into the air, so they have something to aim at. If this is what James Agee meant by "fearful of intactness," I can't get enough of it. The Club comes to sing good night to Colbert, who takes refuge in another berth, treading twice on Rudy Vallee's pince-nez as she climbs up. (Shades of "Some Like It Hot" and "Twentieth Century": when train travel lapsed in America, something died in the national sense of humor.) And so the plot sprints on, as if to prove that when people talk about breakneck farce they mean it. Some viewers find Sturges's love of slapstick both juvenile and evasive, but its chronic intrusion is *meant* to disrupt the flow; I come away from "The Palm Beach Story" (whose Thurberish working titles were "Is That Bad?" and "Is Marriage Necessary?") with the sense that nothing is to be trusted. The sole exception is sex, which is invariably the safest bet; as Colbert remarks, "You have no idea what a long-legged gal can do without doing anything."

Sturges made some of the best sex movies of all time, although practically no sex is on show. Even now, his gift for innuendo—and his ability to sneak all manner of dirt under the nose of a sniffy censor—is enough to snap your elastic. Size doesn't matter. There is the small innuendo, as when Henry Fonda invites Barbara Stanwyck into his cabin to inspect his snake. "Would you care to come in and see Emma?" he asks. "That's a new one, isn't it?" replies the dame. And there is the grand, slow-burning innuendo: the whole plot of "The Miracle of Morgan's Creek," for instance, which finds Betty Hutton not only married to a man she can't recall but pregnant with six children after a night on the tiles with soldiers bound for war. The title points politely to an immaculate conception, but the awful likelihood that apple-pie Betty was cored and peeled more than was strictly good for her is not, I feel, a scenario that Sturges would have rejected outright. "You never think of anything but Topic A, do you?" Joel McCrea asks Mary Astor, in "The Palm Beach Story." She replies, "Is there anything else?" In a letter, Sturges called sex "the Man Act," although if his movies bequeath us anything it is a stern belief that women belong on top. His men are more like Evelyn Waugh heroes: black holes or punching bags—decent sorts, more often than not, on whom Fate, in a pair of high heels, likes to rehearse its fancy moves.



In the end, Fate got around to Sturges himself. By 1948, he was nearing the end of the ride. He made the sinister "Unfaithfully Yours," with Rex Harrison, tried dinner theatre at the Players and writing for television, stumbled heavily into debt, and moved back to France. His own movies had laid bare the trickeries of luck: "It is quite natural for the dice to roll differently for a while," he wrote to Jimmy Conlin. Happily, his fourth and final marriage, to Sandy Nagle, was a double six. Sturges was miserable without her when, in 1958, he was summoned back to New York with an offer of work. He was sixty now, but as poor and hungry as a new kid in town: according to Diane Jacobs, he would deliberately choose bars where you got free dips and crackers with your drink. He died sad and gassy and alone, in the Algonquin Hotel, after too much coleslaw and beer.

Or did he? Certainly Sturges boarded the great sleeping car in the sky on August 6, 1959, but it is difficult to pin loneliness on a man who strained every muscle to push so many people, of all shapes and sizes, onto a movie screen. Sturges once went mad for a book called "Two Lifetimes in One: How Never to Be Tired," and his work stands halfway between a bachelor party and a compression chamber, with all the lifetimes of his tireless characters rolled into one. Some critics find him hysterical, and his comedies may never be loved because they themselves find so little to love in the throng that they survey; but they are far more tolerant than cruel, and nobody of Sturges's learning and libido could consider it either his right or his duty to stitch together a world that is bursting at the seams. He is forever disdaining the sonorous call of solemnity, as if to tamp down any private yearning to answer it: "There's nothing like a deep-dish movie to drive you out in the open," in the words of "Sullivan's Travels." But Sturges had nothing to apologize for: he saw life unsteadily and saw it whole, and that may be the deepest dish of all. ♦

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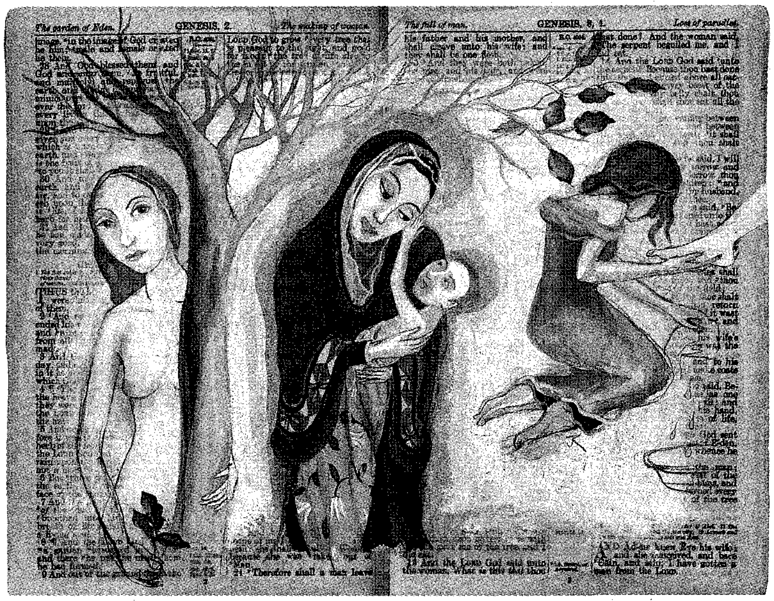
BOOKS

CAN EVE BE REPRIEVED?

Feminist scholars take on the Good Book.

BY JOHN UPDIKE

MORE than a century ago, in 1895, Elizabeth Cady Stanton wrote, "The Bible teaches that woman brought sin and death into the world, that she precipitated the fall of the race, that she was arraigned before the judgement seat of Heaven, tried, condemned and sentenced. Marriage for her was to be a condition of bondage, maternity a period of suffering and anguish, and in silence and subjection, she was to play the role of a dependent on man's bounty for all her material wants. . . . Here is the Bible position of woman briefly summed up." Stanton, the co-founder, with Susan B. Anthony, of the National Woman Suffrage Association, was introducing the first volume of "The Woman's Bible." This volume, a critique of the Pentateuch, went through seven printings in six months, and was condemned as Satan's work by a multitude of clergymen and editorial writers. The organization Stanton had helped found, meeting in Washington the following year, voted to disown it: "This association is non-sectarian . . . and has no official connection with the so-called Woman's Bible, or any theological publication." Nevertheless, the rebuked, bedridden, obese, and octogenarian Stanton carried through, in 1898, with the second volume, covering the rest of the Bible, from Joshua to Revelation, remarking in her introduction, "All through the centuries scholars and scientists have been imprisoned, tortured, and burned alive for some discovery which seemed to conflict with a petty text of Scripture." Her determination to counter-arraign the Good Book cost her some public esteem; it was Susan B. Anthony who wound up, for what it was worth, on the dollar coin.



What the Bible has to say—or not—to modern women.

JULIA KUHL

Discomfort with the way women figure in the Bible—in, say, the story of Adam and Eve in Genesis 2 and 3 and in the strictures of St. Paul in I Corinthians—was first voiced in English by the female mystic Julian of Norwich, who in her "Revelations of

Divine Love" (c. 1393) cites, from the Pauline epistle to Timothy, the verse "I permit no woman to teach, or to have authority over men; she is to keep silent" and asks the reader, "Because I am a woman should I therefore believe that I ought not to tell you about the goodness of God?" The Quakers, founded in the seventeenth century, deëmphasized the more egregiously patriarchal passages and preferred what is now called "inclusive"—genderless—language in translated Scripture. The nineteenth century saw in America the first ordination of a woman (Antoinette Brown, educated in theology at Oberlin and briefly installed as pastor of a small Congregational church in South Butler, New York, before resigning) and some proto-feminist protest by the abolitionist Quaker Sarah Grimké, whose "Letters on the Equality of the Sexes and the Condition of Women" (1838) entered spirited objections less to the Bible itself than to the male monopoly on its interpretation. But it was not until the early nineteen-sixties that women in significant numbers entered the lists of Biblical scholarship, and it is these women whom Cullen Murphy, a practicing Catholic and the managing editor of *The Atlantic Monthly*, writes about in "The Word According to Eve: Women and the Bible in Ancient Times and Our Own" (Houghton Mifflin; $24).

As the adroitly straddling subtitle suggests, this is a book with a forked topic: the ancient women in the Bible and the modern women who are trying to study them. A typical chapter begins with an evocation of a place (Union Theological Seminary in New York, the Jazreel Valley in Israel, the ruins of Nineveh in Iraq), goes on to present an interview or two with a female Biblical scholar, and ends on a quizzical, inconclusive note. "The Bible is often quite uninterested in, or unable to comprehend, the questions pressed upon the text from modern perspectives and experiences," the Biblical scholar Phyllis A. Bird is quoted as saying. Amy-Jill Levine, the Carpenter Professor of New Testament Studies at the Divinity School at Vanderbilt University, says, "To go back to a Jewish woman's life in Judea before the destruction of the Second Temple—well, it's very hard to do." Bernadette Brooten, a professor at Brandeis University, whose doctoral dissertation became the book "Women Leaders in the Ancient Synagogue," discusses carved inscriptions that ascribe to Jewish women the titles of "priest" and "head of the synagogue" and ends by confessing, "I've often had this thought: that I'll die and go to heaven, and Rufina will meet me, and I'll greet her as *archisynagogos*. And she'll say, '*Archisynagogos*? Nah. That was just my husband's title.'" Murphy himself—a scrupulous and attentive but rather reserved guide, who doesn't wear his faith on his sleeve—concludes that "the actual lives of women in antiquity . . . remain dimly apprehended."

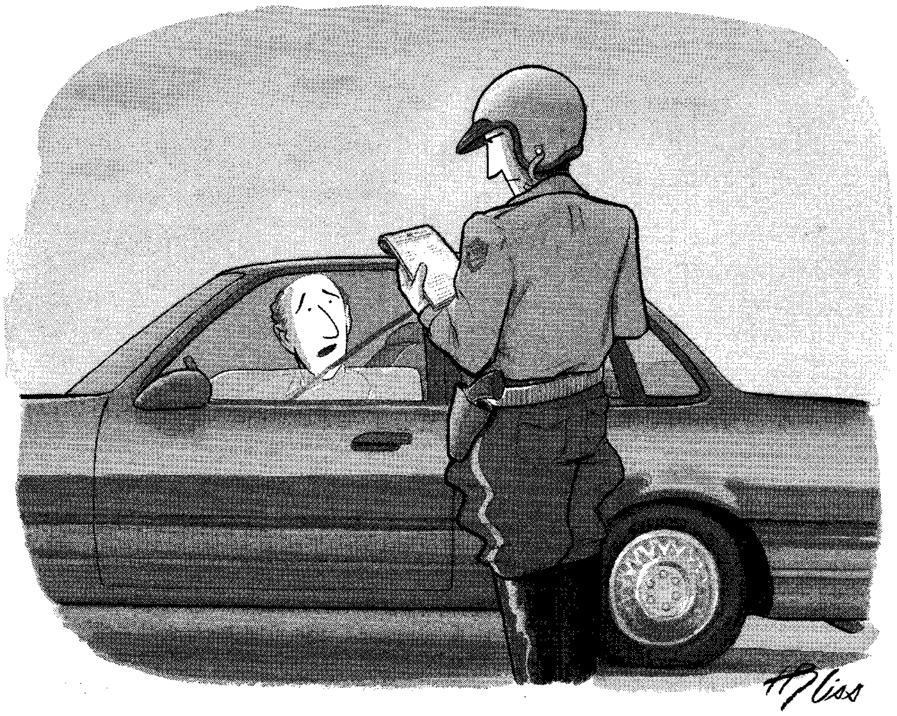
The living women, who bucked the "academic malestream" to become Biblical scholars, are more vivid, even though their curricula vitae tend to run together in the mind's eye. They were reared in religious environments and in college showed an aptitude for ancient languages and a passion for serious study that overcame the doubts of their male instructors. For example:

> As a youth in Merced, California, Kathleen Corley was an evangelical Christian and a member of a charismatic movement. She used to distribute Bible tracts on streetcorners. . . . With some trepidation—the fear being that it might ruin her faith—she sought out higher education, enrolling at Westmont College, a highly regarded Christian school in Santa Barbara. . . . She took Greek, though her adviser tried to dissuade her from doing so, thinking it would be too hard. It turned out that she liked Greek and was good at it, and she sped right through it. In graduate school, at Fuller Theological Seminary, in Pasadena—another conservative institution—she continued with her Bible studies and picked up Hebrew and Coptic. Through a natural progression she became interested in the Nag Hammadi texts, a collection of early Christian documents discovered half a century ago in Egypt.

Tivka Frymer-Kensky, an Assyriologist and Sumerologist especially interested in questions of gender in Mesopotamia, "grew up in Forest Hills, in Queens, the daughter of Polish Jewish émigrés who were actively leftist in their politics and devoutly Conservative in their religion. . . . Her early ambition was to become a chemical engineer, but she found herself thwarted again and again by high school teachers—this was in the late 1950s—who deemed her scientific interests to be inappropriate for a woman and turned her away from formative opportunities." At the Jewish Theological Seminary, in New York, "she became the first woman ever to be accepted into the program for the teaching of Talmud."

A note of inadvertence, as well as of stubborn persistence, recurs in these personal histories:

> Karen King grew up in the ranching community of Sheridan, Montana, far away from this world [of Biblical scholarship].



"If I take back what I said about your pants, will you let me go?"

She was drawn into it more or less by accident—"I stumble into things," she explains—when, as an undergraduate at the University of Montana, she happened to take a class from John D. Turner, a member of the *Nag Hammadi Library in English* project, who passed around copies of tentative translations of various Gnostic texts.

King proceeded to work with the Koptische-Gnostische Arbeitsgruppe, in what was then East Berlin. Back in the United States, she organized a conference on "Images of the Feminine in Gnosticism" and edited its papers into a book, which she gratefully sent her Berlin mentor, Hans-Martin Schenke. Murphy reports, "He told King some years later that he had given the book to his wife, thinking that she might have some use for it." Similarly, Karen Jo Torgeson, the Margo L. Goldsmith Professor of Women's Studies in Religion at Claremont Graduate University, in California, sent her German mentor, Ekkehard Muhlenberg, a copy of her book "When Women Were Priests" and received a letter back saying, as she remembers it, "The cover is beautiful. The acknowledgments are deeply moving. But I'm afraid I cannot bring myself to read it." The German headwaters of theological scholarship are as yet but lightly tinctured by feminism.

And the feminist lessons of "The Word According to Eve" lie more in the biographies of its learned living females than in any dramatic reappraisal of women in the Bible. Murphy surveys a bubbling field but offers no cooked dish, in the form of a proposition as memorable as, for instance, Harold Bloom's conclusion that one of the authors of the Pentateuch was a woman. One contemporary issue that Biblical studies do bear directly upon is female ordination, which the Roman Catholic Church, the Greek and Russian Orthodox Churches, and the Seventh-Day Adventists still oppose. St. Paul, the same who wrote that the head of the woman is the man and that women should be silent in church, also referred in his epistles to a number of women as if they were leaders of Christian groups, at a time when there was no formally educated and ordained priesthood. In Romans 16:1-2 he wrote, "I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church at Cenchreae," applying to her the Greek word, *diakonos*, that he applies to himself and Timothy. The seventh verse of the same chapter salutes "Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me." Scholarly violence has been committed to keep a woman from being hailed as an apostle: Martin Luther argued that "Junia" was a mistake for "Junias," a presumed but nonexistent diminutive for "Junianius."

In Acts, Peter quotes the prophet Joel, "Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy," and pagan religion already possessed a strong tradition of women as prophets and seers. In general, the more intimately a religion is tied to domestic practices the more important women will be in it; early Christianity was a house religion, whose first chapels were simple rooms set aside for worship. Outside of Scripture, the fifth-century tomb of a woman called Leta identifies her by the word *presbytera*, whose masculine form translates as "priest." In ninth-century mosaic, the word *episcopa*, the feminine of "bishop," appears next to a woman named Theodora. A letter from Pope Gelasius I in 494 A.D. complains, "We have heard to our annoyance that divine affairs have come to such a low state that women are encouraged to officiate at the sacred altars."

Murphy quotes Amy-Jill Levine as wanting to ask Martha and Mary, "So what did you and Jesus talk about? What did you guys get out of this? What was in it for *you*?" One thing they got out of it was this charismatic young man's willingness to sit and talk with them, and his claiming (in Luke 10:42) that Mary's education was more important than Martha's housework. In the Judaic culture of Jesus' time, women were not permitted to study Torah, did not join men for meals, had few legal rights, and were stigmatized as unclean after childbirth and during menstruation. Leonard Swidler, one of the few male Biblical scholars who figure in Murphy's survey, concludes in his book "Women in Judaism" that their status was of "severe inferiority," and that an "intense misogynism" surpassed the male bias of other contemporary cultures. By one rule, a male was forbidden to speak in public to a woman he did not know: Christ's disciples, in John 4, "marveled" that he had engaged

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BRIEFLY NOTED

THE SNAKE CHARMER, by Sanjay Nigam (Morrow; $22). Even his obstinate wife admits that Sonalal is the best snake charmer in India, but when his adored cobra, Raju, bites him he bites back—cutting the elderly snake in two and severing his own life into "before" and "after." This arresting and old-fashioned first novel is about fleeting renown, sex, betrayal, and, in the end, making do—which, as the author clearly knows, attends any life in art.

CHILDREN OF CLAY, by Raymond Queneau, translated from the French by Madeleine Velguth (Sun & Moon; $14.95). Queneau published this delightful novel in 1938; it is nothing less than a tragedy that it remained untranslated into English for sixty years. The buffoonish M. Chambernac, diligently compiling a compendium of nineteenth-century French literary lunatics, pays little attention to the lunacy all around him; meanwhile, his wealthy relations, the family Claye, fall from grace, their financial inferiors endure, and madness rules. Queneau is a wizard of language, form, and genre, but in this novel it is the human beings, foolish and knowable, we remember.

ECOLOGY OF FEAR, by Mike Davis (Metropolitan; $27.50). With the synthetic reach of a MacArthur Fellow and the rhetoric of a gleeful Chicken Little, Davis paints Southern California as a "Book of the Apocalypse theme park," where decades of ecological destruction, urban sprawl, and racial and class polarization are set to collide with earthquakes, wildfires, floods, tornadoes, man-eating mountain lions, and plague-infested rats and squirrels. Davis's cataclysmic history is clearly designed to disabuse anyone still willing to buy into the area's long-cultivated peaceful and sun-drenched mythology.

THE MUSIC OF LIGHT, by Lindsley Cameron (Free Press; $24). Kenzaburo Oe is a Nobel-winning Japanese writer whose books, often about a writer father and his disabled son, are provocative mixtures of fact and fiction. Oe's son Hikari was born brain-damaged, a "monster baby," and yet at an early age he began to compose short classical pieces of Mozartean clarity, which, one musician said, "freed me to feel the sadness that was in my heart." In examining the mutual dependency of these remarkable artists, this delicately crafted book becomes an extension of their works: it illuminates the meaning of selfhood in a country whose language has no word for "privacy."

IMAGINING ATLANTIS, by Richard Ellis (Knopf; $27.50). Ellis, who writes about the deep, here takes on the lost island, which was first described by Plato and has held the interest of luminaries and crackpots—Francis Bacon, Arthur Conan Doyle, and Jules Verne among them. Engaging, lucid, and full of lore, Ellis's book makes a convincing case that Atlantis was merely a morality tale of Plato's, and along the way provides insight into our enduring preoccupation with things vanished and lost.

a Samaritan woman in theological discussion beside a well. Again and again, his preaching and actions dismiss the taboos of a sexist and xenophobic Judaism; these liberating dismissals became one of the appeals emphasized by the Gospel writers and St. Paul. Paul, whose strictures on feminine silence and headdress have made him notorious among women, also wrote, "Husbands, love your wives" (Colossians 3:19), and, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). Christianity, though not exempt from sexism, offered women spiritual equality and importance. Women, accepting the offer, played a major part in what Nietzsche scornfully called "the slave revolt of morality."

Women supply the majority of Christian congregations and in recent decades have made striking advances into the once all-male domains of leadership and scholarship. Female ministers, unthinkable in my boyhood, have become commonplace. They make one wonder why it took so long—their gifts of nurture and communication so obviously suit the ministry. A third of all American divinity students, Murphy tells us, are female, and in a number of the most prestigious schools women constitute an absolute majority. How apologetic should Judeo-Christianity be about its patriarchal nature? The standards by which it is criticized—the ideas of equality, fairness, and freedom—are by and large of its own engendering. It is true, the story of the Fall, when taken as other than a charming representation of a perennial, prototypical event, can inspire such dire misogyny as that of Tertullian, who apostrophized Eve thus:

> You are the devil's gateway; you are the unsealer of that forbidden tree; you are the first deserter of the divine law; you are she who persuaded him whom the devil was not valiant enough to attack: you destroyed so easily God's image, man. On account of your desert—that is, death, even the Son of Man had to die.

Murphy quotes this, and also Milton's lines, following the description of Adam's ruination, "Thus it shall befall / Him who to worth in women overtrusting / Lets her will rule." And I can recall hearing my grandfather reading aloud with relish, to the female of our household, St. Paul's assertion that the head of the woman is the man The Bible, an accumulation whose mos ancient elements are more than three thousand years old, can be cited in support of male tyranny, of slavery, of homophobia, and of anti-Semitism.

Yet on the question of women—a question without an equivalent "question of men," whose greater physica strength and relatively uninvolving role in the task of procreation has left them free to do the questioning—Judeo-Christianity, as it has evolved in history compares well with other cultural constructs. It was not Christianity that condoned, as late as 1910, foot-binding, a fashionable torture inflicted on female children, or the habit of female infanticide, which skews China's gender balance even now. It is not Christianity that in parts of Africa promotes clitoridectomy as a means to properly shaped femininity. It is not Christianity that inflicts upon women, as in Iran and Afghanistan, hysterical restrictions that inhibit their access to employment, education, social life, and even medical care.

Male attitudes toward women, mixed of the wish to draw close and the wish to flee, of resentment and adoration, of a child's dependence and a dominator's sadism, are bound to be somewhat sick; that is, unstable, fluctuating, and muddy. The whore/angel dichotomy occurs in the Bible and even approaches resolution there, in several-sided figures like Eve and Mary, a sinner and a virgin who are nonetheless paradigmatic mothers. The strange persona of Mary Magdalene, concocted from several unrelated glimpses in the Gospels, has been the center of complex psychological activity, whose paradox Marina Warner, in "Alone of All Her Sex," summarizes:

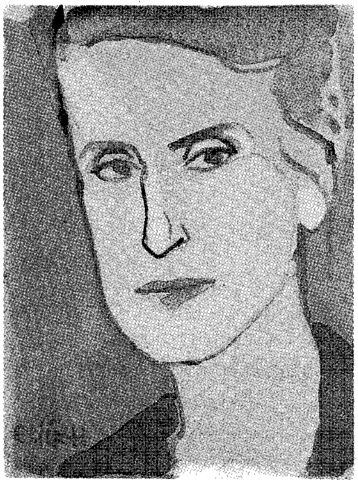
> The Magdalene, like Eve, was brought into existence by the powerful undertow of misogyny in Christianity, which associates women with the dangers and degradation of the flesh. For this reason, she became a prominent and beloved saint.

Ambivalence abounds. The contemporary women of "The Word According to Eve" are critical, in several senses, of the Bible, and yet are held to it by a powerful early attraction and dependence. The poet Alicia Ostriker, discussing the anthology “A Feminist Companion to Reading the Bible,” capped her “manifesto of complaint” by allowing that “the religion of the Bible is also the source of every value I hold precious.” Were Elizabeth Cady Stanton alive now, she might feel that “The Woman's Bible” is still being written, with a breadth and an insight superior to her own and to those of her scholarly advisers, who were drawn from thin female ranks. She could not but rejoice at seeing women storm the bastion of Biblical scholarship, swarming in over the dusty ramparts of all those dead Middle Eastern languages and fragmentary parchments. Or she might, in one of her swerves of independent thought, decide that the Bible is an incorrigible document, set forever in its ways, beyond any doctoring with gender-sensitive rewordings, and that women had best hearken to what sings to them and turn a deaf ear to the rest. ♦

WHEN CULTURES COLLIDE

Winning and losing in nineteenth-century Borneo.

BY ALICE TRUAX



C. S. Godshalk

IN the eighteen-twenties, when Gideon Barr—the self-styled rajah at the center of C. S. Godshalk's novel “Kalimantaan” (Holt; $25)—is merely a strange little boy living with relatives in England, he is already dreaming of Borneo. His adored mother was buried on its northeastern tip a few years before, and he continues to write letters to this glamorous and neglectful apparition, tucking one into a tobacco tin, another into an abandoned boot—“viaducts for some telepathic post,” as his uncle puts it. One letter describes the kingdom he plans to build there when he grows up:

> It will be like this, a huge banyan all wide and sloping and a palace beneath with thick rugs and parrots and a great maranti bed. You shall be my Queen in the Trees. I shall come home in the evening and tell you of my adventures. “You have been marvelous,” you'll say.

Reading this ravishing first novel, which reimagines the founding of the British Raj in Borneo, we half believe that Barr's childish promise has been fulfilled: that the novel's exotic territory has already been tamed for our enjoyment and profit. After all, “Kalimantaan” includes maps and historical acknowledgments, and there is a useful glossary of Malay and Dyak terms in the back. The writer seems to have gone ahead, like Barr, to pave the way, so that riches can be laid at our feet. But Godshalk's portrayal of British imperialism turns out to be ravishing in both senses of the word: it is a tale of acquisition which also documents shattering losses and unfathomable mysteries. Throughout the novel, for readers and characters alike, the desire to know and the impossibility of knowing compete with equal ferocity.

Barr manages to build his fantastic palace with its great *maranti* bed before his thirtieth birthday. While he is ostensibly on an independent mission to chart Borneo's northern coastline, the heir to the Sultan of Brunei approaches him for help in putting down a rebellion upriver, and Barr asks for a chunk of territory in exchange. The British-led advance easily overruns the rebels' stockade, and afterward the Dyaks—native headhunters who are assisting the Sultan's forces—spread out through the territory and slaughter every living thing in sight. Permission to take heads is the only payment that the Dyaks require, and this arrangement

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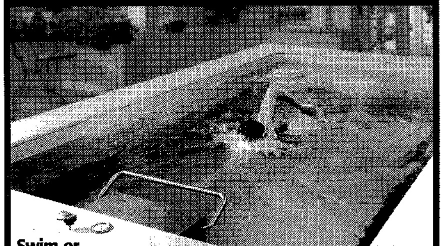
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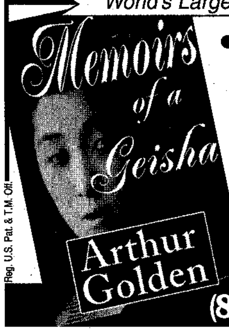

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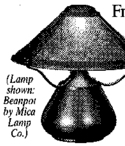
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will become the foundation upon which the British Raj is built:

> That's how they did it. The broad swaths of lawn, the orchards and gardens, the astana, the gunboats, the interlocking system of forts, the mines, the young district officers—their dewy brides arriving at dockside with crates of crystal and plate—wax seals melting in the sun, tiffin, chintz-covered sociables, the vast shipments of purgative salts, antipyretics, and love letters, all began with that miserable little massacre.

In most historical fiction, the world is utterly familiar to its inhabitants, and only the reader is a stranger. In "Kalimantaan," however, the characters' efforts to comprehend their immediate environment are unceasing, and their lives often depend on their success: crocodiles lurk in the river, certain insects are deadly, delicious foods can turn poisonous in the heat. And mastering the environment is only the beginning. Although Barr—through a combination of fearlessness, good instincts, wise advisers, and dumb luck—manages to stake out his territory with astonishing ease, holding on to it proves to be far trickier. Kalimantaan, as Borneo is locally known, is on the margins of several empires, and borders are fluid. The harbors are full of Malay pirates, the Chinese are mining the interior, the Dutch are patrolling the sea, and everyone is attempting to rob everyone else.

Legal and moral codes therefore rest with whoever happens to have the upper hand at any given moment, and as the narrative cuts back and forth in time and space among the novel's dozens of characters, even familiar assumptions begin to seem confounding. Is it a good thing or a bad thing that the Dutch Resident allows his bastard children to be reared just a few hundred yards from his house? Is cutting your enemy's head off any worse than running him through with a bayonet? In one memorable scene, Barr reprimands a Chinese mining boss newly under his jurisdiction for persisting in the forbidden practice of selling children: Chan Kho is all apologies in Barr's presence, but as he watches the retreat of this arrogant intruder he is filled with bitterness and contempt, muttering, "Our junks traded here when his kind lived in caves." Despite such enmities, trade flourishes, churches are built, boundaries are extended, and the Dyak longhouses fill with severed heads, thereby extending local feuds for decades to come. An odd, heterogeneous society has been formed, ripe for the ravages of invasion and disease.

A HONEYMOON CONCEPTION (1952)

All night, though not a flake fell, the snow deepened...
From Grand Central their train joggled forth (stray
snow scraps wadded in gulleys, like
a leafletting not fully swept away)
at dusk; in Connecticut, the darkness opened

(but here and there a street lamp's sliding glow
showed how the scraps had formed a quilt) as they
toasted themselves in the dining car,
their glances, given the press of what still lay
before them, sometimes shying toward the window.

In Vermont (though in the sleeping car they kept
the shade drawn and so never saw the play
of bridal white on white on white,
dark pine fastnesses suddenly giving way
to snow-packed moon-limned stands of birch), they slept,

part of the time. But neither one had ever
been wider awake than on the following day,
in Quebec, Canada (a city
of foreign signs—*gare*, *rue*, *petit déjeuner*—
and everything wrapped in white except the river,

whose fierce black urgings made of the whole place
a kind of high-piled dockyard, every slipway
loaded with crates of lace and crystal).
On a noon walk, happily mapless, they
chanced a side street and soon came face to face

with a colossal, larger-than-life snowman
in red scarf and blue cape, who, in his warm,
generous, featureless way, smiled
down on them. (Or snow*woman*?—it was a form
smooth and rich-bellied, as if big with child.)

—Brad Leithauser

After six years, Barr is joined by his cousin Richard Hogg, a younger, handsomer, more brutal version of himself, who proceeds to secure the interior with terrifying efficiency. And after eleven years, when the question of marriage can be put off no longer, Barr reluctantly sets to one side his haughty Malay mistress and goes to England to court a widowed cousin. He needs a knighthood. He needs an heir. And for these things he needs a proper English wife. When he arrives at his cousin's home, he takes one look at her and settles on her seventeen-year-old daughter, Melie, instead: "He sat between them eating their delicate food, peonies and fans glinting up from the bottom of his soup. His eyes grazed the pots of cream, the pear compote, the fine gold hair of the girl's lip. She might die in the first wet monsoon." This cold observation is only the first of Barr's many miscalculations about the woman with whom he will spend most of his life.

Godshalk has a genius for cutting to the heart of things, as if the time for leisurely and considered acquaintance didn't exist. A wealth of information can be offered up in a sentence, as in this description of Hogg's secret passion for the wife of a clergyman:

> Hogg would love two things in his life: the savage Mua Ari, a worthy and entertaining opponent for a decade and a half, and Mrs. Dolan; and here he loved purely, deeply, like a young, young boy, this doyenne of laundry wires and bleach solutions, this remarkable shaper of spaces—legumes planted not only in rows but in concentric circles of increasing radii giving the Dyak final conviction that she was a witch, this

field lieutenant of a crisp little army—amahs, children, husband, animals—all adhering smoothly to her will.

In Kalimantaan, where death can come so suddenly, and in such a breathtaking variety of guises (malaria, drowning, decapitation, poisoning, smallpox, attack by rats), the reappearance of the novel's principal characters is never a certainty, and so the reader hoards fragments of their secret selves as letters from home are hoarded, or as Melie cherishes a Venetian glass bead given to her by an inland tribal matriarch. In the shimmering precariousness of life here, intimacies swell with significance.

Most haunting are the unexpected affinities that cross tribal and racial lines. One of the unlikely additions to Barr's household is Unggat, an orphaned chief's son who makes his way to the family's door. He is mischievous and quick, a pedigreed thief with diseased feet and wax in his ears. Day after day, during one of Melie's interminable pregnancies, he patiently teaches her the names of the local flora and fauna—first in Dyak and then in Malay—until Barr's umbrella bearer sadly informs her that the boy has made the entire vocabulary up. And yet by the time Unggat is found out the bond between the unlikely pair has far outstripped the hoax that united them. Many years later, at the end of Melie's life, "her most treasured possession was the word 'empkening,' the name he assured her was Dyak for her favorite cassia fistula blossom."

These cross-cultural sympathies never seem sentimentalized—partly because they are born out of keen need, and partly because they are counterbalanced by frequent estrangements between presumed intimates. Indeed, Barr's relationship with Melie, which spans mistresses and miscarriages and deaths and rebellions and, eventually, thousands and thousands of miles, is the most perplexing and tortured of all: his marriage proves to be a territory where he can gain no permanent foothold. And by the novel's end, as we pick through the ruins of Barr's neurotic dream, we have become equally humbled by the challenge of deciphering this corrupt and miraculous world. Yet we never stop struggling to meet that challenge, just as we continue to turn hopefully to Godshalk's glossary long after we realize that it's woefully, slyly, incomplete. ♦

(Advt.)

Experience, they tell us, is the best teacher. **Ray Bradbury** has had more than six decades of storytelling experience, and it has helped him to hone his art. ***DRIVING BLIND*** is his latest collection of tales—twenty-one new grand tours through fantasy, time, and memory. The author who once colonized Mars and explored the dark magic of Autumn is not content to rest on his literary laurels—instead, he is constantly on the move, traveling hitherto uninvestigated highways in search of what thrills and frightens us, and makes us human. Whether he's racing toward a broken-down circus in a dusty Mexican town or cruising slowly through a sad place where first love and first death unexpectedly collide, Bradbury keeps a firm hand on the wheel as he drives us to remarkable places he has observed, inhabited, and dreamed.

We are often blind to—or in the dark about—the special interests that dictate policy to the lawmakers we elect to serve us. In ***THE BUYING OF THE CONGRESS***, **Charles Lewis** and the Center for Public Integrity offer sorely needed insight into how corrupt yet perfectly legal practices affect the food we eat, the air we breathe, and so many other vital aspects of our everyday lives. This exhaustively researched exposé names the congressmen and women who are bankrolled by cigarette manufacturers, pharmaceutical companies, and other big-money concerns. Knowledge is indeed power. And ignorance—about who really pulls the strings in Washington—is anything but bliss, since it undermines our country's cherished principles of a government for the people.

Margaret Lawrence returns us to our nation's beginnings in ***BLOOD RED ROSES***—a follow-up to her Edgar Award-nominated *Hearts and Bones*. Set in post-Revolutionary War Maine, this novel again features midwife Hannah Trevor, who must unravel the mystery behind a series of shocking murders while embroiled in her own private battle against forces that would take her young daughter away from her. This is fiction rich in atmosphere, history, humanity, and suspense that reminds us where we came from—and, at the same time, shows us how far we still have to go.

We'll talk again.

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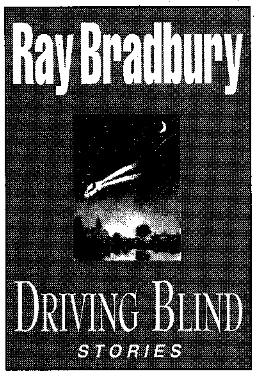

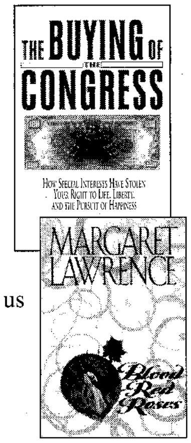
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HOW SPECIAL INTERESTS HAVE STOLEN YOUR RIGHT TO LIFE, LIBERTY, AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS
MARGARET LAWRENCE
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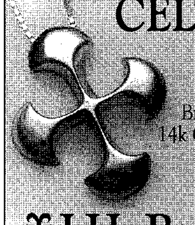

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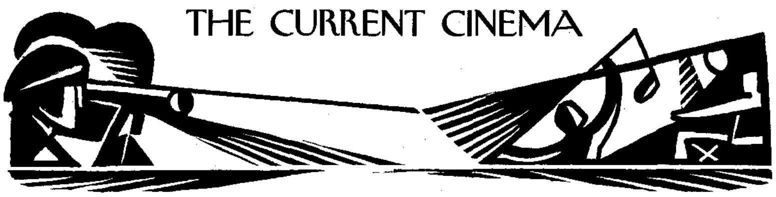
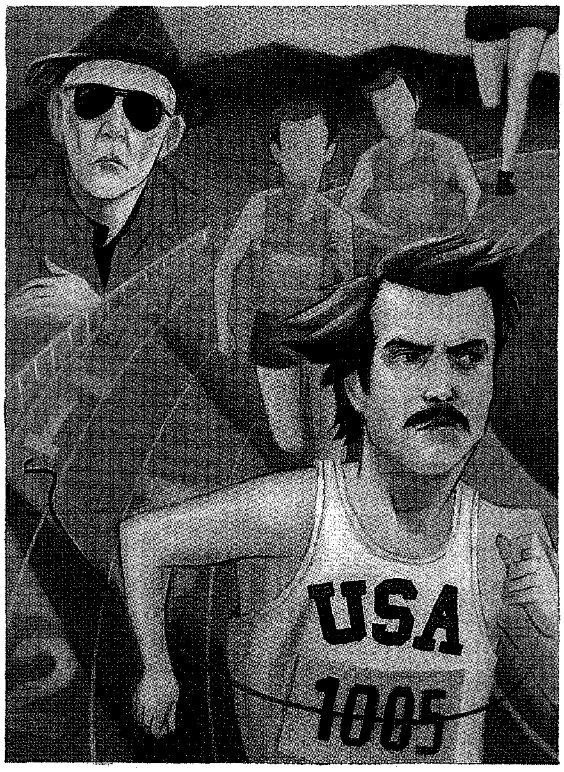


RUNNING THE DISTANCE

Remembering an unorthodox track star.

BY DAPHNE MERKIN

I'VE always found movies about sports heroes compulsively watchable. Perhaps because athletic skill is as much about sweaty exertion as inborn talent, it's a naturally inspirational subject, sure to bring out the hidden cheerleader in even the most sedentary skeptic. Every film about sports—whether it has the low-budget fairy-tale appeal of "Rocky," the elegant meditativeness of "Raging Bull," or the slow-motion nobility of "Chariots of Fire"—becomes a metaphor for mastery of the self. You eventually lose sight of the particular sport or person and focus on the phenomenon of sheer will: Why do some people have it in them to triumph while others don't? The mystery of drive, of unstoppable ambition, is fascinating precisely because it defies explanation. Bad childhoods don't account for it; *good* childhoods don't, either. In the end, it's just implacably there, to be admired and envied by those of us who linger on the sidelines.



"He always wanted to race out front, as though he were trying to get away from something."

"Without Limits," Robert Towne's film about the Olympic athlete Steve Prefontaine (Billy Crudup), holds the enigma of Prefontaine's self-propulsion up to the light, turns it this way and that, and then wisely leaves us more or less in the dark. Prefontaine, who died in a 1975 car crash, at the age of twenty-four, was considered the most popular track star in the world at the time of his death, and has already been the subject of a feature film and a documentary, "Fire on the Track." Towne's movie begins after the cheering has stopped, with Prefontaine's coach, the legendary Bill Bowerman (Donald Sutherland), brooding in the stands over Prefontaine's passion for running his own way. "He always wanted to race out front," Bowerman muses, "as though he were trying to get away from something." The film is too sophisticated to pinpoint the forces that enabled the slightly built son of a millworker from Coos Bay, Oregon, to set seven American records in his lifetime; instead, one has the feeling throughout of a certain informing puzzlement—a welcome change from the usual babble about motivation. We get bits and pieces of his background, but they're treated lightly: we see intermittent flashbacks of the young runner being chased by a gang of boys who taunt him with the name "little Kraut," and a quick glimpse of a hardworking, unemotive mother, who both fears for and takes unspoken pride in her son. After Prefontaine receives the one-on-one invitation he has demanded from Bowerman's scouts—"I won't go anywhere near Eugene," he says, "unless Bowerman personally lets me know that he wants me"—she offers her wry endorsement: "Just get an education. That would be nice, too, you know."

Once Prefontaine arrives on Bowerman's turf, the fun begins: the two are like a couple who perform a wary mating dance, assessing and resisting and finally succumbing. Sutherland, in the role of the revered Bowerman, who custom-made footwear for his boys and eventually developed the waffle sole for the first Nike running shoe, is an ingenious example of casting against type: he brings a subversive twinkle to the all-American concept of the college coach, suggesting the eccentric possibilities that lurk within the crewcut-wearing, laconic ex-Army major. Bowerman believes in strategizing, in pacing oneself, while the new recruit insists on "front-running"—running as fast as he can every time he goes out on the track. "Running any other way," Prefontaine says, "is chickenshit." The time is 1969, when youthful protest against the R.O.T.C. and other forms of institutional brass is heating up. As a way of asserting a code of disciplined sportsmanship, Bowerman sets the team's first meeting for exactly 7:27 A.M. and demands that "no one has hair longer than his dick." But underneath his General Patton manner the coach has thought deeply about the metaphysics of the sport, and it is here that he and his young trainees connect. "Running is basically an absurd pastime on which to be exhausting oneself," he tells them. "But if you can find meaning in it, you can find meaning in another absurd pastime: life."

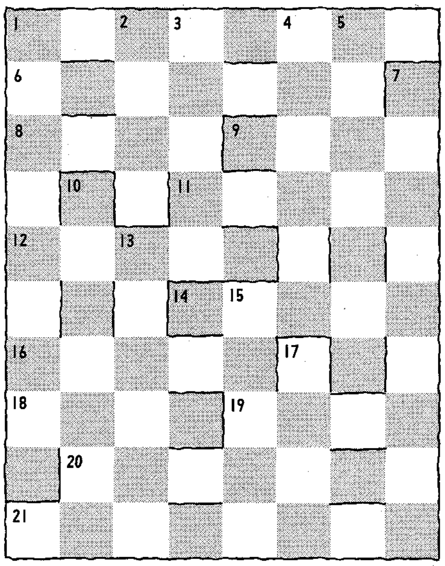
Prefontaine rapidly establishes himself as someone to watch; the girls love him, the crowds call him "Pre," and even Bowerman grudgingly admits that "the little rube's a performer." The coach never really shakes the young runner's faith in his own style, which is always to go all out, but what each acknowledges in the other is a belief in the purity of effort. (Pre shows the same determination in romance that he does in running; he pursues a pretty coed, played by Monica Potter, who is religious and wants to remain a virgin. Although it's the Age of Aquarius, with sympathy and sex abounding, Pre accepts her on her own terms, if only because of the intensity of her conviction.)

Possessed of an imperturbable cockiness, Pre makes it to the ill-fated 1972 Olympics in Munich, where he announces ahead of time that he will win the men's five-thousand-metre race. "I can endure more pain than anyone you've ever met," he explains at one point. "That's why I can beat anyone you've ever met." In the event, he follows Bowerman's advice, paces himself, and comes in fourth. This part of the film is gripping: it conveys a sense of pressured momentum and of the dynamics of group behavior—the men sniffing each other out like a pack of wolves. After failing to win a medal, an embittered Pre retreats into a minimalist existence—living in a trailer and tending bar—only to be sought out and confronted by his former coach. In one of the film's strongest scenes, they argue about native talent versus strength of will; with a pitcher of fresh lemonade at his elbow, Bowerman coaxes Pre back to his discarded ideals, insisting that his way of looking at his success as merely a product of will is "the ultimate vanity."

"Without Limits" is a long way from Towne's 1982 film about athleticism, "Personal Best," which floundered in unintentional smarminess—in the erotics of taut female thighs and the mild kink factor of Mariel Hemingway's lesbian relationship. Towne is one of those Hollywood insiders who is known as much for his uncredited script-doctoring as for his credited work, which includes writing "Chinatown" and "Shampoo." In this film, which he directed and co-wrote with Kenny Moore, one of Prefontaine's running buddies and a former *Sports Illustrated* writer, Towne has pushed beyond his own limits, filling in the spaces around his understated dialogue with an uncharacteristically heartfelt story. Crudup, whose sly, vulnerable presence recalls that of James Dean, conveys both the blustery parts of Prefontaine that were visible and the complex interior that was not; Judith Ivey stands out in a small part as Bowerman's comprehending wife. But it is Sutherland, with his wounded mouth and onion-skin quality of containing layer upon layer of personality, who imbues the film with a strange and buoyant air of elegy—a salute to potential, tapped and untapped. ♦

8 x 10 CRYPTIC

NO. 58 BY PETER GORDON



ACROSS

1 Head of state caught in financial need (8)
6 Rustle head of cattle and most of an enclosure with western moose (7)
8 Entertain a great number (4)
9 Pure foreign country (4)
11 Order displayed in histrionics (5)
12 Duplicate igniter (5)
14 Baby's smile shows cavity (5)
16 Skater Lipinski clutching one crown (5)
18 Playwright edges away from vocalist (4)
19 Sound spoils stringed instrument (4)
20 Racetrack figure pitching spitter (7)
21 S.A.T. score upset philosophical guy (8)

DOWN

1 A chemist reviewed carbon structural diagram (9)
2 In the mouth, certain breads swell up (4)
3 Opposed to college prank (5)
4 Pilfer no toys, oddly enough (6)
5 Most frightful alien captures Cleveland Indians (7)
7 Peddlers stuck out clogs belonging to that woman (9)
10 Rain dances not freaking out Met (3,4)
13 Sad time before Havana uprising (6)
15 Thick piece of wood over a light wood (5)
17 Hit bottom (4)

• •

The solution to puzzle No. 57 appears on page 85. For a free copy of "The New Yorker's Guide to Solving Cryptic Crosswords," please send your fax number or a stamped, self-addressed envelope to "Solvers' Guide," The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. For an electronic version, send an E-mail to puzzleguide@newyorker.com.

SHOUTS & MURMURS

THE ENVELOPE, PLEASE: A VIEWER'S GUIDE TO THE EMMYS

BY JON STEWART

OPEN *with vibrant, elaborately costumed dance number set to a medley of popular hits. As music swells, bring the dancing girls to an abrupt halt. End music. Add audience applause and a booming introduction of the well-respected, acerbic host. Play host's signature theme song. Cross host to podium.*

HOST: General greetings and a query as to the audience's well-being. Statement of own well-being. Survey of surroundings. Improvised analogy comparing surroundings to different surroundings. Sarcastic jab at expected length of proceedings.

Pause for laughter.

HOST (*cont.*): Confusion about actions of government officials. Statement of proposed personal action if given opportunity to govern.

Pause for laughter. If laughter is not forthcoming:

HOST (*cont.*): Recognition of enormous power wielded by many audience members. Statement of fear over possible consequences that failure to entertain said powers would entail.

If laughter is forthcoming:

HOST (*cont.*): Query as to audience's familiarity with behavior of recently disgraced cultural icon. Incredulity and displeasure at said behavior. Command for icon to discontinue behavior. Description of outlandish new consumer product created as a result of icon's behavior.

Pause for laughter.

HOST (*cont.*): Praise audience for sense of humor. Query as to their readiness for program's continuation. Introduction of two participants who will begin process of bestowing honors: an unattractive, humorous male renowned for his portrayal of other unattractive, humorous males, and a female of great physical beauty who has achieved fame for her skill in walking while wearing expensive clothing.

Add music and applause as host leaves stage. Bring humorous man and beautiful woman to podium.

MAN (*to woman*): Compliment concerning sexual attractiveness.

WOMAN (*stilted, as though reading*): Acceptance and return of compliment.

MAN: Lurid sexual innuendo. Winking proposition with broad physical gesturing.

WOMAN (*stilted, as though reading*): Unusually intelligent rebuke of said proposition.

MAN: Surprise at intelligence of rebuke. Feigned lack of disappointment at rebuke. Conceited statement of missed sexual opportunity for the woman, again with broad physical gesturing.

Pause for laughter among audience and presenters.

WOMAN: Query as to the identity of the author of previously read statements and indictment of their ability. List of possible honorees.

Stand man and woman aside. Show each possible honoree performing the task for which each is to be honored. Show all present possible honorees in the audience waiting for the result of their effort.

MAN (*opening a sealed correspondence*): Announcement of honoree.

Great rejoicing among the believers of the verdict. Reflection and bitter questioning among the others. Bring the honored one to the stage. A female of surgically enhanced sexual attractiveness hands a totem of achievement to the honoree, who grasps it with great reverence. Audience applause

HONOREE: Breathless surprise. Self-effacing remark concerning previous outcomes of similar events. Feigned lack of preparation. Expression of gratitude for inventors of the totem as well as constituents of totem. Expression of gratitude for believers in verdict. Expression of gratitude for members of blood lineage and Supreme Exalted Being. Expression of gratitude for creators of shown task. Expression of regret concerning those who have not received expressions of gratitude. Statement of non-harmful intent for those who have not received gratitude. Plea for group subjected to persecution to be no longer subject to said persecution.

Swell music.

HONOREE (*cont.*): Regret at musical interruption and self-criticism at lack of organizational and communication skills. Sudden remembrance of those still in need of expressions of gratitude.

Dim music slightly.

HONOREE (*cont.*): Fear of further recrimination if closing remarks are not forthcoming. Hurried expression of love for those present, viewing at home, or living.

Swell music. Audience applause. Honoree is escorted away by presenters while displaying totem to the audience. Host appears.

HOST: Perceptive remark concerning unexpected length and emotional tenor of honoree's presentation. Example of previous presentation famous for such characteristics.

Pause for laughter.

HOST (*cont.*): Introduction of corpulent woman, well known for recognizing and satirizing her physical condition, and an adolescent known for imitating another adolescent known for contracting a fatal illness.

Repeat as necessary. ♦

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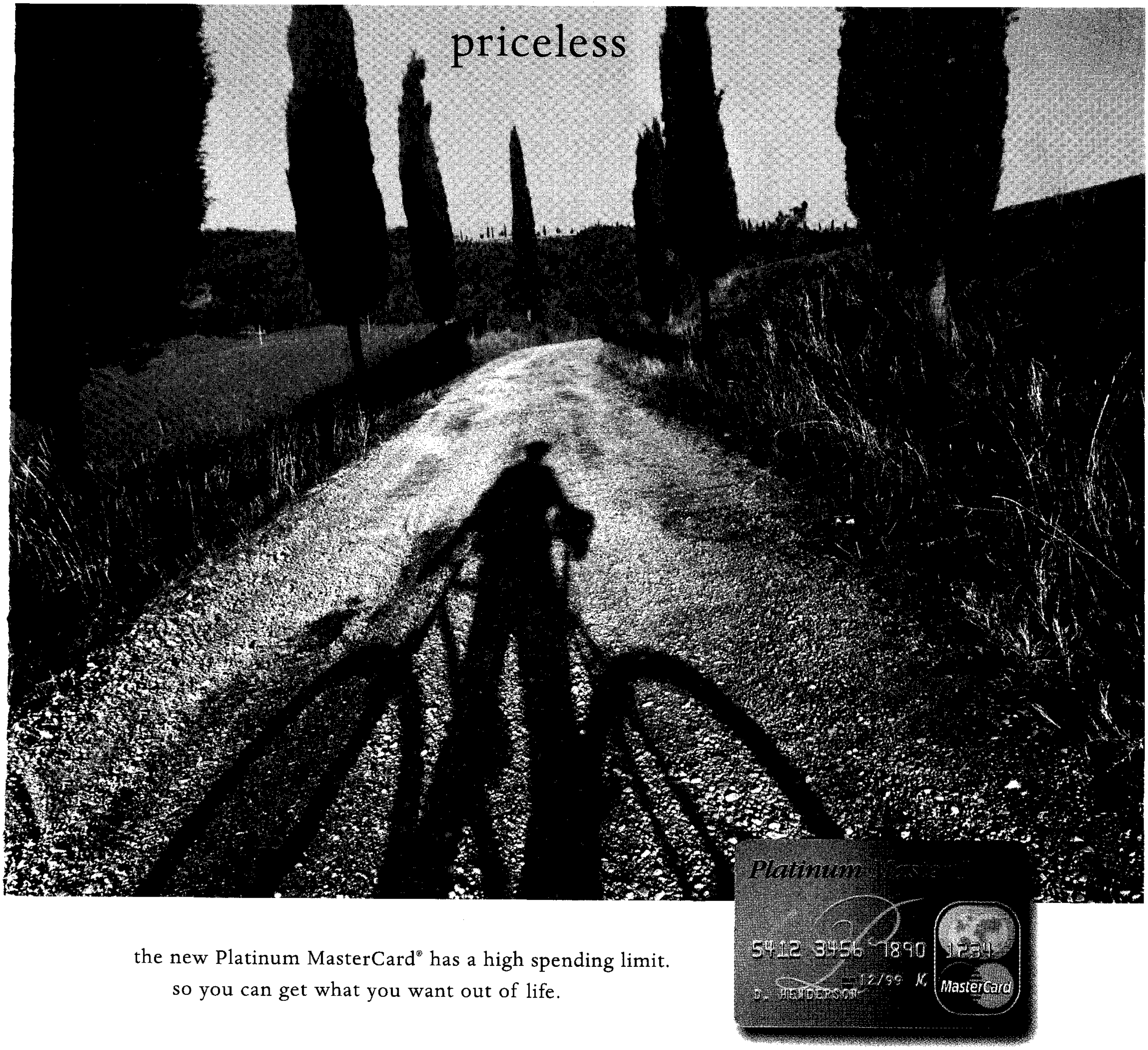
shipping bike to italy: $235

map of tuscany: 9,000 lira

seven days without email: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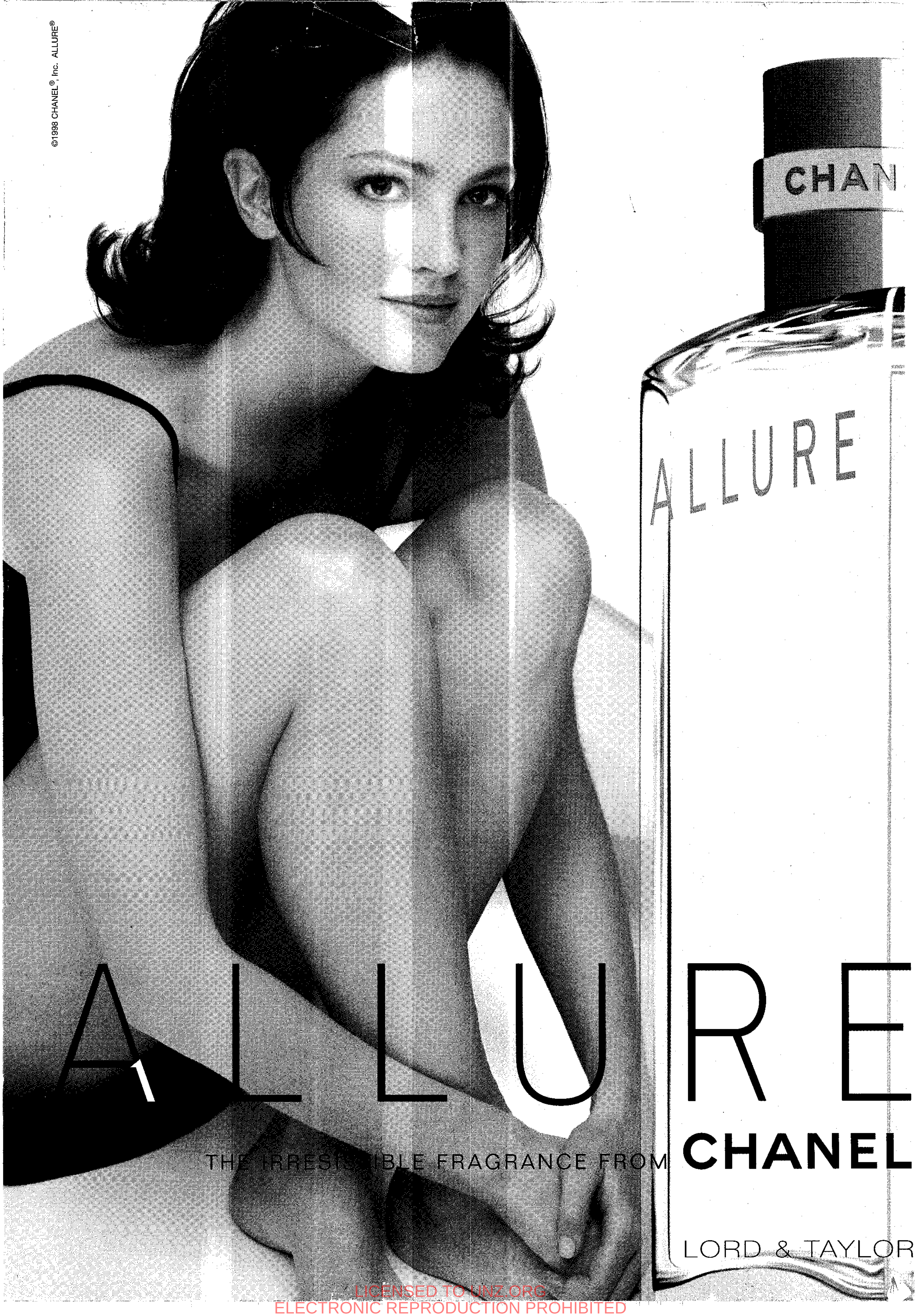
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